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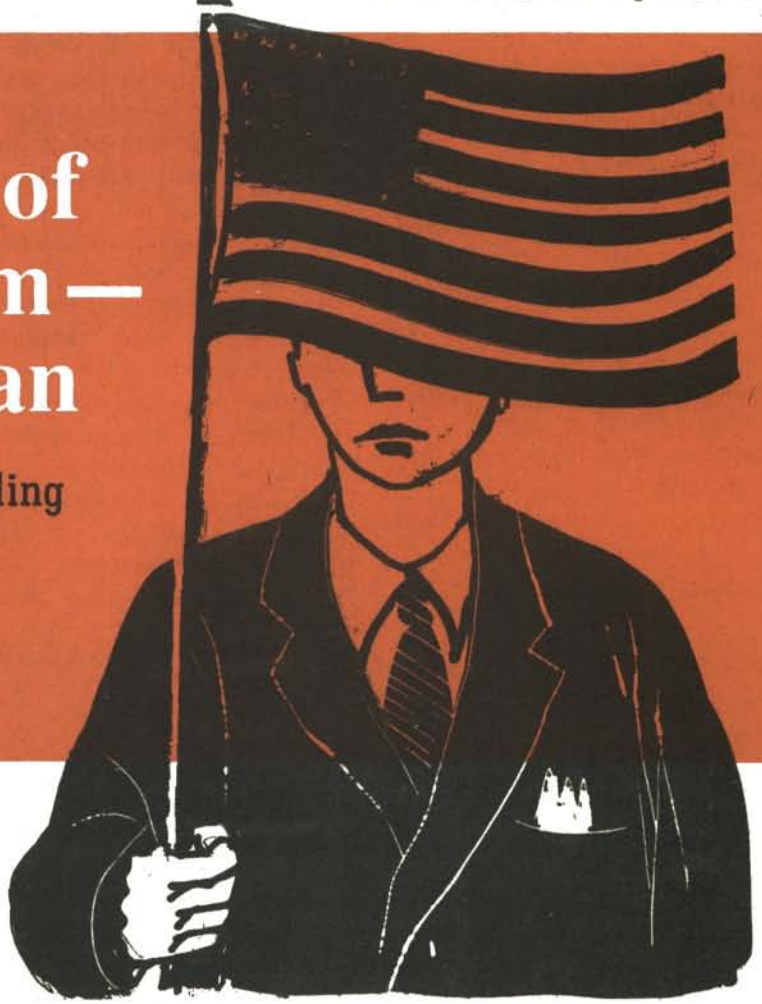
ONE DOLLAR

AUGUST 29, 1980

John Garvey
INFALLIBILITY?
The Editors
POST-CONVENTION BLUES

The selling of conservatism—the American way

Thomas B. Mechling



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Halfway back 'I write now as an apostate who eventually left the church and then, some time later, made another turn which puts me today "halfway back." My experience thus adds one more incident to a larger story whose them[illegible] the church's current crisis of authority.' Frank S. Zepez

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Correspondence

Democratic daydream

Great Neck, N.Y.

To the Editors: The problem with Thomas Powers's recollections about his five pleasurable months in the Army ["The Citizen Army," July 4] is his suggestion that the return of the draft might not be a bad idea if only it were allowed to become more democratic in composition. The trouble with this sort of daydream is that women will never be inducted, congressional sons will continue to be exempted or shunted into safe jobs, and working-class kids and racial minorities will end up as riflemen. Those who want to reimpose the draft don't want Democracy-in-Action. What they want as they make clear time and again are the tools to intervene abroad militarily so that once again they can satisfy their need to prove that America hasn't "lost its nerve."

MURRAY POLNER

Deacon's role

Marblehead, Mass.

To the Editors: Some thirty years ago, two diocesan priests in Buenos Aires asked me if it were true that all the priests in the United States were drunks! When I read Father Ranly's article "Questions for the Pope" [July 4th] and his bald statement that eighty percent of the Latin American diocesan clergy live in concubinage—heavily hedged by the qualifying statement of his ignorance of any scientific study on the topic—I am reminded of the typical ethnocentrism of the neophyte.

There are many countries in Latin America where the diocesan clergy are surpassed by none: I have lived with them for long years and have admired them greatly because of the spirit of sacrifice which they bring to their work. Someone who has labored only among the Indian enclaves, and for a relatively short period of time, would not appreciate this or have the opportunity to know about the vast majority.

As an answer to the problem concerning the Eucharist, I would suggest that he look into the new legislation for the permanent deaconate. The permanent deacon cannot celebrate the Eucharist, but he can make the Eucharist more available through a system of distribution. If each village, for instance, which does not have a resident priest, were to have a deacon, then he could make the trip once a week, or so, to attend the celebration of the Eucharist and bring back the Blessed Sacrament, reserve it, and distribute it to the people on Sundays. The deacon can also baptize solemnly, witness marriages and give many blessings upon which the popular piety of the people rests so heavily.

Like the catechist, he has been instructed in basic points of doctrine and can repeat these to the people as he goes about his rounds and leads them in prayer. He is considered a natural leader in the community, and the very culture of the Indians gives him prominent recognition and a widespread opportunity to exercise the apostolate.

His selection and training are also important. He should be a married man, one who is known and respected for his integrity and ready to serve the cause of Christ.

(REV.) JAMES F. McNIFF

False nostalgia

London, Canada

To the Editors: J. M. Cameron's "The Idea of a Liberal Education" [Apr. 11] is quintessentially a product of the University of Toronto of some years ago. It is, in some respects, also quintessentially Ontarian and consequently should be an interesting cultural document for American readers. That said, it is not, in my opinion, a useful document in charting the course of liberal education as we approach the twenty-first century.

Inherent in Professor Cameron's argument are presuppositions which anyone teaching in Ontario recognizes all too well: the nineteenth century is idealized; the eighteenth century (despite his nod to Pope and Berkeley) is virtually ignored because it is the cradle of American culture and "values" (the term Professor Cameron dislikes). The Oxbridge model of education is prized largely, one has to believe, from nostalgia for a more British Ontario.

Once one recognizes the soil from which Professor Cameron's "Idea" of liberal education grows, it is easy both to sympathize with his cultural dislocation in a rapidly changing Toronto and to reject his proposals.

One must recall that the societies he remembers with nostalgia did not exist as he depicts them. All were based upon the exploitation of the bulk of the population, whom he ignores: women (who clearly don't interest him) and all men below the level of the "skilled artisan." This, too, is the glorious civilization which gave us World War I and the horrors of Hitler's Germany.

He speaks of today's "moral revolution" and the "collapse of literacy," without considering the large percentage of the population, totally or functionally illiterate, in nineteenth-century Europe or the realities of the moral behavior of some of the cultivated gentlemen whom he admires in retrospect.

Like Professor Cameron I hope some people will continue to pursue a classical education. Unlike Professor Cameron (I suspect) I hope that these same students will temper their studies with the insights which modern research is providing into the problems, aspirations, and wisdom of the men and women whose labors supported the leisure of earlier elites, and who continue to support the studies of modern university students.

ANN STRAULMAN
University College,
The University of Western Ontario

(Continued on page 479)

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Contents

Volume CVII, Number 15

Correspondence	450
Editorials	451
Land of Uncle Enver: *Randall Fegley*	452
Orthodox & infallible?: *John Garvey*	454
Great tumult of print: *Thomas Powers*	457
Patriotism, free enterprise, & positive thinking: *Thomas B. Mechling*	459
Halfway back: *Frank S. Zepezauer*	462
Stage: *Gerald Weales*	465
Screen: *Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.*	466
Dance: *Don McDonagh*	467
Verse: *Alice Price*	468
The family idiot: *Saul Maloff*	469

Books

The Second Coming: *Gerard Reedy*	471
The Plan of St. Gall: *Dennis Leder*	472
Smile, Please: *Robert Phillips*	474
Fin-De-Siecle Vienna/A Nervous Splendor/ The Vienna I Knew: *Stephen Toulmin*	475
Another Part of the War: *Tom Cornell*	477
1929: *John Druska*	478

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THE POLITICS OF DISTRUST

ONCE UPON A TIME, before the Great Depression, Adolf Hitler, the Cold War, and nuclear weapons, the historic function of political conventions was to provide a Peter Finley Dunne or an H. L. Mencken with opportunities for documenting the more ridiculous aspects of human nature. They would have had no trouble carrying out that task in 1980; indeed they would have had additional raw material in the self-importance, drama-mongering, and instant higher wisdom of the television commentators. But the stakes have become too high—the impact of an American administration on the lives of Americans and on the peace of the world, too great—for the amusement to last. Despite the fact that None of the Above appears to be the first choice of the American people, no such creature will be on the ballot in November—nor in the White House during the years leading up to 1984. We have no choice but to plunge into the usual gaps between substance and symbol, reality and rhetoric, that the political conventions exhibited so exuberantly, and make the best sense possible.

Four years ago the Carter candidacy promised to end the distrust dominating American politics ever since Watergate had been piled upon Vietnam and assassinations. It was one of many promises the president has been unable to keep. The politics of 1980 are the politics of distrust. The Big Question in this election seems to be, Whom do you distrust least, and on which issues? For instance:

John Anderson: The convention period has not been easy on Anderson. It is natural to attribute his drop in the polls to the concentration of media attention on the conventions. But it is also true that the conventions point up what Anderson lacks—a political party. His "national" candidacy still appears to be a sort of water bug skittering on the very surface of American politics, kept there, in some ways, by its very lightness and fragility. It has, as yet, demonstrated no hold in the *institutions* of U.S. politics.

The reason to distrust Anderson is that he is the Jimmy Carter of 1980. He is a fresh face who combines integrity, associated with small-town or rural America, and efficiency, expressed in his emphasis on "hard truths" and innovation. As well as a fresh face, Anderson has some ideas—the gasoline tax, for example, and a leaning toward an incomes policy based on tax incentives. But so did Jimmy Carter in 1976: remember zero-based budgeting? Many of the failures ascribed to Carter are in fact the failures of Congress. Despite overwhelming Democratic majorities in both houses, Carter was never able—indeed, didn't even try—to build a popular movement that would support administration policies in the halls of Congress. The revived New Deal coalition that Carter momentarily assembled at the '76 convention was frittered away while the president sought to establish himself with Washington and the business world. Why should Anderson, lacking even that initial base and not known for his cloakroom skills either, fare better? In foreign policy, too, Anderson is today what Carter was in 1976: a penitent supporter of the war in Vietnam who

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advocates cutting the military budget. Why believe that Anderson, any more than Carter, can maintain that position in the face of domestic and international pressures to do otherwise?

Teddy Kennedy: Kennedy, of course, is no longer a presidential candidate. But no post-convention analysis can ignore the phenomenon of a defeated candidate who nonetheless dominated a nominating convention. Kennedy's speech and the feelings he stirred should lay to rest the cliché that the so-called old liberalism is dead. The outcome of the election could hang on whether partisans of that liberalism see the best hope for its future in a vote for Carter or a vote for Anderson—or even a vote for the "new populism" of Ronald Reagan.

But if that liberalism is far from dead, it is also far from flourishing. And the reason, again, is distrust. Personally Kennedy was the election campaign's first victim of distrust. But his political viewpoint elicits considerable distrust as well. It's worth noting that his convention speech contained very few specifics as to actual programs for carrying out the liberal agenda. Most discouraging of all he has failed to address persuasively the question of inflation. The liberal emphasis on employment is crucial, and it is to the credit of a supposedly dying creed that "jobs, jobs, jobs" is, for the moment, the leading theme of the campaign. The fact remains that inflation consistently ranks higher on the public's list of concerns, and that no full-employment strategy can succeed unless it is convincingly linked to an anti-inflation strategy. The Democratic convention was deceptive in this regard: it took place at a moment when the fright of a twenty-percent inflation rate was receding and the unemployment rate, especially in sectors whose unions were heavily represented at Madison Square Garden, was increasing. Already the inflation rate is jogging upward again, and prices and government spending may soon be the issues putting liberalism once more on the defensive.

Jimmy Carter: Here we come to the heart of distrust territory. "Can we trust Jimmy Carter?" was the underlying motif of the Democratic convention. Issue by issue, there was as much to be said for the administration's case as for its critics'. The "open convention" was a highly debatable notion: since the primaries, virtually nothing has transpired, excepting the silly business of Billygate, that Democratic voters were not fully aware of—so why set aside those commitments? And whatever could be said for allowing greater opportunity for future delegates to vote their consciences, *these* delegates were not chosen on the basis of their capacities for deliberation and conscientious choice. Likewise the Carter case against wage-price controls and against a specific dollar-figure for a jobs program has substantial merit. Carter's position on abortion is surely closer to the public's sentiments than either the GOP call for a constitutional amendment or the Democratic platform's demand for Medicaid funding. And even the ludicrous MX missile and the half-baked registration scheme address *problems* that are real and that opponents often prefer to ignore.

But the agitation on each of these issues expressed the fear that Jimmy Carter is a man with no ideological anchor and, once again in the White House (without even the reckoning of a second-term bid), accountable to nothing in the Democratic party tradition. That is why the insistence on a $12 billion figure in the jobs plank; that is why the penalties urged on Democrats who don't support ERA; that is why the demand that the candidate spell out his differences with the party's platform before nomination.

Ronald Reagan: The Republican convention was noteworthy for two events: the choice of George Bush as Reagan's running mate and the rhetorical effort of the candidate to make his conservatism a legitimate successor to FDR's New Deal. The first was meant to signal Reagan's openness to compromise, the second his concern for the working people and minorities whom Republicanism has seemed to shun. Both steps are necessary to the creation of a New Reagan.

Distrust of the New Reagan was the uniting element for the Democratic convention, and obviously will be the leading theme of Carter's campaign. It is partly a matter of Reagan's long-held ideological views, but it is also a matter of the Republicans' present platform. There is apparently nothing wrong with America that less taxation and government intervention at home, and more guns and government intervention abroad, cannot cure. The Reagan tax policy is no doubt genuinely viewed by his followers as a means of assisting the disadvantaged. But that will occur *eventually*—after tax relief disproportionately for the privileged. There are ample grounds for distrust here.

The Republicans promise to make Jimmy Carter's performance in office the issue. The Democrats promise to make Ronald Reagan the issue. In short, which scares you the most, a Carter whom people fear cannot be measured by his words or a Reagan whom people fear can be?

The politics of distrust are certainly dispiriting, but this year they are also the only realistic politics in view.

Report from Albania

LAND OF UNCLE ENVER

KEEPING ALBANIA BACKWARD

BOUNDED BY Greece, Yugoslavia and the Adriatic Sea, Maryland-sized Albania is Europe's poorest nation. In spite of a blessing of chromium, copper, petroleum, and timber, Albanians are the poorest ($500 per capita per annum income) and least literate (25 percent illiteracy) national group in Europe. Their social structure is that of the early medieval clan rather than that of a modern nation-state. Blood feuds, xenophobia, and stubbornness have been the norm in rural Albania. Traditionally the population was 70 percent Moslem, 20 percent Greek and Albanian Orthodox and 10 percent Catholic, but religious statistics have not been available for

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decades. Although Europe's only Moslem nation and the site of early Christian cultural expansion, Albanians retain a good deal of pagan theology.

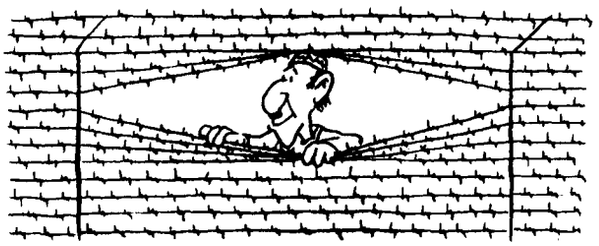
The Second World War marked the beginning of a new era in Albanian politics, an era of Communist domination and oppression. The Italians invaded Greece from Albania, only to be thrown back towards the Adriatic. With German assistance, the Italians finally forced the Greeks to surrender in April 1941. That same year the National Liberation Movement was founded by several Albanian leftists including a French-educated teacher named Enver Hoxha. The N.L.M. was established as an "antifascist" resistance group, but their definition of "fascist" soon grew to include the other resistance organizations particularly the democratic Balli Kombeti and the royalist Legitimacy Movement. Eventually, the Soviet-backed N.L.M. was victorious with Yugoslav assistance.

In the immediate postwar period, Albania became a satellite of Yugoslavia, but when Yugoslavia was expelled from the Comintern in 1948, Albania took advantage of the situation and allied with the Soviets. The N.L.M. was changed to the Albanian Worker's Party and pro-Tito officers and members were purged. By 1961 and Khrushchev's "de-Stalinization" program, the Albanian government, now firmly in the hands of Hoxha, rebelled against Soviet-style Communism and became China's voice in Europe and the United Nations. The Russians withdrew leaving four submarines and vast naval facilities on the Adriatic island of Sazan. With Mao's death and subsequent changes in China, Chinese aid was cut and Hoxha chose to lead Albania on a new path once again. Today Hoxha remains in power drawing support from a variety of sources and conducting business with Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, and a dozen other Western, Communist, and Third World countries.

Albania's forty years of rapid political, economic, and social changes have taken their toll in human life and personal freedom. To great losses in human and economic resources suffered during the Second World War, the Communist government added purges, forced migration, minority and religious oppression, and the general restriction of the freedoms of all Albanians. The Catholic community has been a particularly frequent victim. After the archbishops of Shkoder and Durres refused to form a national Catholic church in the late 1940s, Hoxha began a campaign against the Catholic church, which had been Albania's main source of literary talent and education standards. The two larger religious bodies in Albania, the Orthodox and Islamic organizations, also suffered under the Hoxha regime. All religions can claim hundreds of Albanian martyrs.

The final act came in 1967 when all belief in God was outlawed. All clergymen were imprisoned and most were executed. Allegedly at the request of the youth of Albania, all 2,169 churches and mosques were either closed or converted to other uses. Shkoder Cathedral is now a sports complex and swimming pool. The main Orthodox church in Durres is a cafe and beer hall. Tirana Mosque remains padlocked. St. Nicholas church has been converted to workers' apartments and a convent church to secret police headquarters. An anti-religious museum was founded in Shkoder. Although claiming Albania to be the world's first atheist state, both Hoxha and Radio Tirana warn of continued religious practices, underground clergymen, and lack of anti-religious measures in some districts. Disguised pilgrimages, religious weddings, and strikes during religious holidays are commonplace. Such activities have had a great cost. In one episode four elderly Franciscans were burned to death in their church. Priests were deprived of ration cards and some died of starvation. Rev. Shtefen Kurti, who fought militants destroying his church with his bare hands and was imprisoned, was finally shot in 1972 at age 74 for baptizing a fellow-prisoner's baby. In November 1973 Albania's Orthodox Archbishop Damnian died in prison at age 80. The massacre of Christianity and Islam continues to this day and although religious belief is far from being wiped out, organized religious bodies are all but destroyed. Albanian children are being indoctrinated in atheism and Communism and used to spy on their parents, particularly in matters of religion and foreign influence.

The religious are not the only oppressed in Albania. With every change in policy come purges not only in government but in the professions, education, and military. First Titoists



were purged, then Soviet supporters, and now Chinese supporters. Each purge had its own rash of executions. Criticism of government policy has also brought purges and executions, and Hoxha frequently accuses those in his government of coup attempts. In 1974 and 1975, the ministers of Defense, Finance, Communications, Industry, and Mining and two other portfolios were ousted, as well as the Deputy Premier and Chairman of the State Planning Commission. Hoxha accused them of complicity in a coup attempt. The ministers of Education and Agriculture were expelled in 1976. Before these purges the official Albanian news agency published figures showing that the police had "exterminated" 550 armed gangs and 4,000 revisionist criminals and had repulsed over 3,000 frontier incursions. There are between 10,000 and 50,000 political prisoners. The government and "Uncle Enver," as the press calls Hoxha, watches over all. Dress, hairstyles, and "unworthy" behavior are criticized and mail is censored. In 1976 the Hoxha regime demanded changes of personal names not conforming to the nation's "political, ideological, and moral standards." Yet Hoxha's own name means "religious teacher" and there is no word of changing it.

Like other Balkan countries, Albania has its minority problems. First, the Albanians themselves are divided into Geg and Tosk dialects. In addition five percent of Albania's citizens are of nationalities other than Albanian. There are Serbs, Vlachs, Bulgarians, Gypsies and Montenegrins, all of whom have seen

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the destruction of their cultures by Albanian chauvinism. The Communist government's general policies on minorities can be summed up in Hoxha's own words, "The religion of Albania remains Albanianism."

With the death of Tito, politics in the Balkans have entered an era of uncertainty. Hoxha spurns the great powers in favor of relations with smaller nations. He has stated a desire to come to the aid of Yugoslavia if that country is invaded, but Hoxha's real enemy lies within Albania.

In spite of mineral wealth, forests, and strategic location, Albania's economy is getting worse, and there is a direct relation between Albania's economic performance and its human rights situation. During the 1960s, troublesome mountain villagers were forced to move into the coastal valleys where for some time collective farms were little more than slave labor camps. Fishing is restricted to avoid potential migration. Despite Roman ruins, Byzantine churches, well-preserved folklore and beautiful beaches, tourism remains minimal to avoid foreign contact. Thus a potentially rich source of foreign exchange is left untapped. The Hoxha regime publicly claims Albania to be "the most successful country in Europe." In fact, Communist Albania has a retarded agriculture, a limited industrial structure, and a backward and ineffective service sector.

Hoxha, now 70 years old, is plagued by diabetes and heart disease. His country has not become more accepted by the world community, unlike Tito's Yugoslavia. Several million Albanians live in Italy, Greece, France, Yugoslavia, and the United States. King Zog's heir, Leka I, is actively seeking the overthrow of the Communists, and several organizations, such as the Paris-based Legitimacy Movement and the Boston-based Free Albania Committee, are waiting in the wings.

RANDALL FEGLEY

(Randall Fegley, a previous contributor, is a free-lance writer who deals solely with human rights and minority problem cases.)

Of several minds: *John Garvey*

ORTHODOX & INFALLIBLE?

THE LONG HAUL IS OUR ONLY FINAL GUIDE

THE DEBATE between the Vatican and dissident theologians has not really been a debate at all, but a non-conversation in two different languages, both designed for declaiming. One group speaks of the importance of conformity to defined Catholic doctrine, ignoring the problems which arise here because of historical inconsistencies; the other speaks of human rights and the need for freedom of inquiry, without addressing the important questions of doctrinal consistency, the authority of tradition, and orthodoxy. It is a peculiarly Catholic fight, and it must look funny to outsiders, especially in the case of the Vatican vs. Hans Küng. Here humility meets humility with no holds barred, in the best tradition of combative piety, one side questioning the honesty, honor, loyalty, or piety of the other, all the time protesting filial or paternal concern. In the long tradition of Catholic infighting it is out of synch with the rest of history; in the age of instant news and five-minute solutions we hear a wheel-spinning which began more than a century ago with the first Vatican Council. The problems that council raised are more in evidence now than they have been in years.

The objection of conservative Catholics to the liberal defense of theologians who have dissented from papal pronouncements is that dissent, under these circumstances, has nothing to do with human rights. Theologians have every civil right to believe and teach whatever they like. But it is the job of bishops—and in the most conservative view the unique job of Rome—to decide whether teachings advanced as Catholic are fact in accord with Catholic tradition. Error may have *some* rights (a notion new to conservative Catholics with Vatican II), but if it is in fact error, the business of the hierarchy is to point it out. To protest that this is a violation of human rights is a confusion of categories, in this view.

There is certainly a point here. Orthodoxy is essential to catholic Christianity. In its various root meanings the word signifies "true teachings," "true glory," and "true worship." As unfashionable as the idea of absolute truths may be, it is not stupid to wonder what criteria to use in figuring out who might be telling you the truth. Bishops are usually boring, but the best argument for them is Jim Jones and Jonestown. At the very least orthodoxy is a consensus that some ideas are fruitless, and maybe in some extensions murderous. Orthodoxy doesn't happen without a feeling for tradition as a living language, and this includes the rich mediation across a range of possible ways of thinking which is one meaning of tradition. Orthodoxy at its best allows for argument; and the alternatives to orthodoxy as a living language are fanaticism, or fundamentalism, or the preferred shallowness of the secular western world—the belief that none of these things matters much, as long as we agree that we will be nice: a luxurious idea which won't help anyone in hard times. (It can be argued that ideas which aren't designed for hard times aren't worth having.)

Bad ideas have happened in Christianity. Christianity is not just a style of doing things or a happy conglomeration of truces between various ways of being Christian. It is about something which mattered to the death, more than once. If Jesus was divine; or not divine; if he was a deluded human being who was exalted by deluded followers; if he was a luminously enlightened human being who was radically misunderstood by his followers; or if his followers were disappointed men and women who covered up Jesus's

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failure with their own deception—and all of these "ifs" cover a number of theories about who he was—it makes a difference. It makes a difference to how we see our own lives and live them, in the light of his life and death and resurrection. It is because the differences between ideas matter that orthodoxy is important.

But Catholic conservatives have yet to deal well with the question at the center of many of their quarrels with Catholics they regard as unorthodox. That question is the question of infallibility. Lord Acton, his teacher Döllinger, and a few dissident Catholic bishops expressed objections to it at the first Vatican Council. Their objections were not answered, Döllinger and Old Catholics (as they were forced to become) were excommunicated, and dissident bishops subsided into silence about a doctrine whose proclamation they accepted unhappily but loyally, to keep a united front against secular forces which seemed to them even more threatening than ecclesiastical absolutism. Apart from the obvious moral and philosophical problems surrounding the definition of infallibility—not the least of which was praise for a state of mind labeled "the sacrifice of the intellect"—there were historical problems: contradictions, for example, between the declarations of councils which met all the accepted criteria for legitimate and therefore infallible ecumenical councils, and later Catholic belief which rejected the conclusions of those councils; and there was a whitewashing of the historical bases on which the arguments for infallibility were erected.

One way of being Catholic grew up around the idea of papal infallibility. The papacy began to represent not only continuity with the apostolic age and an alternative to nationalistic forms of Christianity; now it was God's own Good Housekeeping seal of approval. Although no father of the church, Eastern or Western, reads Matthew's "Thou art Peter . . ." to mean the papacy is founded on Peter's leadership, this fact was ignored. The importance of the papacy is early and apparent, but a papacy with absolute jurisdiction was fought from the beginning, in the West as well as in the East. Frank O'Connor translates an Irish poem which dates from the 7th to the 12th century:

To go to Rome
Is little profit, endless pain,
The Master that you seek in Rome,
You find at home, or seek in vain.

The Eastern churches evolved a theology which placed the episcopacy at the center of the church. Following the separation of the Eastern and Western churches the defenders of an absolutely unchallengeable papacy were balanced by bishops who insisted upon the rights of national churches. The official line had it that Vatican I ended the question forever, but the fact is that a great many Catholic theologians, scripture scholars, and historians do not believe in papal infallibility, or they interpret it in ingenious

ways—for example, by saying that the pope can be said to speak infallibly only when he speaks the mind of the church; but they go on to say that this can be known only when the church has declared itself in council or (since councils themselves have sometimes been contradicted by later Catholic belief) over the long haul.

To believe this requires some playing around with Vatican I. Chapter three of *Pastor Aeternus* firmly rejects the idea that an ecumenical council can be appealed to as "an authority higher than that of the Roman Pontiff," and closes by anathematizing anyone who denies the pope's "full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the universal church, not only in those things which belong to faith and morals, but also in those things which belong to the discipline and government of the church spread throughout the world." Also condemned is the proposition that the pope "possesses merely the principal part, and not the fullness of this supreme power." (This is certainly in the spirit of Pius IX, who was not known for humility or a sense of proportion.)

There was important dissent at Vatican I. However, the majority of the bishops were in favor of the definition, some out of genuine and enthusiastic theological conviction, others because they saw in a strengthened papacy the only hope against the threat of secularism. And although it is easy to see at this distance a conflict between the forces of progress and the forces of repression, many European liberals who opposed the power of the papacy were also anti-religious. It seems ironic now, but there were liberal Catholics who supported a strong papacy because they feared the rise of the nation state, and believed that the papacy would offer an important counterweight. In addition, many of those who opposed a strong central church government were reactionary, nationalistic, and concerned even more obviously than Pius IX with their own rights as bishops.

The situation was not a simple one. The issue of infallibility was raised passionately, debated passionately, and pressure (including the use of excommunication) was used against opponents of papal power, including those who questioned the right of the pope to the papal states. Excommunication was also used against those who felt, after the council, that they could not in conscience accept the definition of infallibility. Döllinger, Lord Acton's teacher, was excommunicated, and Acton expected that he himself would be: he had lobbied against the definition, and although he did not publicly oppose it, he never accepted it.

The historical circumstances which allowed the definition of infallibility have passed, but the questions raised by the definition remain. In our century we have seen Nazism, the Gulag, and Jonestown. Unquestionable claims to authority, religious or secular, are deservedly unpopular. The moral problem involved with the claim to infallibility is a profound one, but first there is the question of historical contradiction.

The fact is that papal statements made in matters of faith and morals have been contradicted by later church statements; and definitions accepted by ecumenical councils and ratified by popes with all of the solemnity required to make them in-

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fallible, by Vatican I definition, have been contradicted. This has been pointed out quite frequently, but it has never been satisfactorily answered. Some of the examples are familiar ones: the condemnation of usury—which was not defined as excessive interest on money, but any interest at all—has been allowed to slip away; it is certainly ignored by whoever handles Vatican finance. The christological teaching of Pope Honorius was later judged to be heretical. The Council of Florence declared that anyone not in communion with Rome was certainly damned, and singled out Jews and Orthodox Christians. Athanasius, in fighting Arianism, was also forced to go against the will of a pope and most bishops; he swung them around.

The answer to the historical problems raised by the declaration of infallibility is not to assert that they are beside the point, now that Vatican I has spoken, nor can we wave vaguely in the direction of the idea of doctrinal evolution, ignoring outright contradictions and the personal limitations of men who became pope. While the idea of the evolution of doctrine is certainly a fruitful and important one, it has its limits. It is valuable, for instance, in tracing the developing articulation of Christological thought. But it becomes a bit Stalinist when it is used to plaster over inconvenient hunks of history. Graham Greene has compared being a Catholic with being a dedicated Communist: you accept the inquisition (or the purge trials) because you believe in an idea which transcends the mistakes made along the way. But there is a use of history which should not be acceptable to honest folk; and where history is ignored, or abused, in the name of Christian truth, the problem is serious. One cannot ignore the circumstances in which infallibility was proclaimed, or the character of the pope who wanted it proclaimed, or the methods he used to assure that it would be proclaimed. (Infallibility itself is a peculiarly nineteenth century idea; the idea that one can have a final statement of "the way things are," or that the truth can be caught in a proposition, is full of the optimism of nineteenth century scientism.)

While it is true that in Hans Küng the Vatican has a critic who seems to relish provocation, it is also true that the historical questions he raised in *Infallible? An Inquiry* deserve an answer. It is not as if he were the only person raising them, or the only person who is affected by the answers Rome gives, or refuses to give, to them. Acton was not answered, nor was Döllinger (who was a better historian than Pius IX), nor were the Old Catholics, nor are the best Orthodox critics. Catholics who believe that the issue is closed would do well to read the Orthodox objections, framed temperately and firmly in the work of John Meyendorff. (In connection with the Orthodox it can also be asked, why have they not needed this ministry of infallibility? They have remained Orthodox for two thousand years without it, and Rome does not question the orthodoxy of the Orthodox churches.)

Papal primacy is to some extent an idea which caused the separation of the Eastern and Western churches, and, during the debates which surrounded the

rights of Rome, defenders of the papacy made use of documents which we now know were forged. These same documents were appealed to by the earliest defenders of papal infallibility. Küng mentions this problem; so did Acton. They have not been answered. (Questioning an opponent's motives, piety, or loyalty to the church really does not constitute an answer.)

So far the problem is more one of intellectual difficulty than morality, but it has a moral dimension as well. I will not argue the moral difficulties surrounding *Humanae Vitae* and the papal teaching of birth control; it is too passionate an issue, and both sides now seem firmly set in their opinions. I will only point out that the *Humanae Vitae* controversy underscores the fact that the Vatican expects Catholics to accept its "non-infallible" decisions as binding, as well as its "infallible" ones. Catholics are expected to trust the papacy as an institution which is not only uniquely responsible for Catholic tradition, but one which is divinely protected . . . our safest guide in an uncertain world, even where it does not claim infallibility.

The need for safety and certainty is not necessarily an edifying thing. We may be called on to trust God in the dark, and do without the feeling of sure footing. Abraham did, on Mount Moriah, and Jesus did, at Gethsemane. Job's comforters, on the other hand, were full of certainty.

Pope Innocent III convened the Fourth Lateran Council. Among other things, the Council declared that Jews must not appear in public on Easter, or on days devoted to Christian lamentation. It forbade Jews from holding public office, and in an appendix said that Jews must take no interest on debts owed by people who had converted to Christianity. What should be of special interest to twentieth century Christians inclined to take the papal authority on its own recognizance is that it also insisted on a special clothing for Jews, and this costume often took the form of a yellow patch. This was enforced by Pope Alexander IV; the precedent was noted by Hitler's racist scholars.

The point here is not that popes and councils are in and of themselves unworthy guides; on the whole they have been good ones. But they cannot be trusted simply because they are popes or councils, or because they are speaking of doctrine, or faith, or morals. That is not enough. In fact the long haul *is* our only final guide to orthodoxy, given the contradictions and occasional outright evil of popes and councils. It should distress us more than it does that in our current church climate Athanasius would be considered simply a dissident, because he was not willing to acquiesce as early as theologians are expected to. Perhaps one day the declaration of Vatican I, and the temporary acceptance of the idea of papal infallibility, will be regarded as we now regard the teachings of Pope Honorius and the declarations of councils whose ideas we no longer accept—as a falling away from orthodoxy, eventually righted by people who appeared, for awhile, to be dissidents. JOHN GARVEY

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Of several minds: *Thomas Powers*

GREAT TUMULT OF PRINT

WHY WRITE POLITICAL JOURNALISM?

IT IS HARD NOT to wonder, going through a pile of more or less current magazines, trying to keep up, just who reads all this stuff? The world calls forth an amplitude of comment each week, argument over the issues of the day, warnings of disaster, testy criticism of the nation's rulers, analysis, denunciation, celebration—a great tumult of print churning up like foam in the wake of public events. Here I go, tossing in another bucketful of a thousand words or so, as if there weren't enough already, as if something vital was still unsaid, when the truth is no mortal could possibly get through it all. One week's wave has hardly ebbed before the next rushes in, scores of periodicals full of the stuff, not just magazines of opinion like *Commonweal*, but scholarly journals, fat Sunday papers, general interest magazines and the newsweeklies. Who reads this mighty torrent? What is it for? Why do we write it?

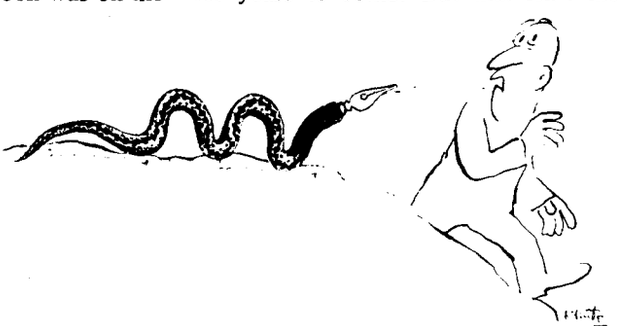
On its surface the intent of political journalism—the sort of writing I am talking about here in the first instance; but the question might be asked of any sort, from poetry to autobiography, which addresses the common experience of men in history—is clear enough. The stance is one of engagement. The subject is one of pressing public importance, at least in the writer's view, and the message is directed to the men with the power to decide. One can imagine political journalism written in a spirit of warm detachment, like a scientific diarist, say, describing for his own pleasure some wrinkle in the life of the honey bee. But in fact one reads very little political journalism written in such a tone. Most of it has the urgency of unsolicited advice. The writer has got something very much on his mind. He is driven to tug on sleeves. Not knowing the men in charge he addresses himself to the general public, in the hope the message will get through.

Once in a great while it does. Back in 1947 George Kennan published an analysis of Soviet foreign policy in *Foreign Affairs*, suggesting that Russian probing of the West was the result of politics in the Kremlin, not part of a fabulous master plan for the conquest of the world. As a result, Kennan said, our response should be both resolute and moderate in scope, an attempt to contain Russia within its postwar borders while we trusted to time to ameliorate the character of the regime.

This was sensible advice, clearly aimed at policy-makers in the Truman administration who had not yet quite decided whether to treat Stalin as another Hitler, or as an apprehensive and misunderstood Friend of the People to be tamed by trust. The remarkable thing about Kennan's article, signed only "Mr. X", was that it actually reached and convinced its intended audience. Containment has been our policy ever since, and Kennan won that special aura of authority reserved for those who are not only wise, but attended to.

Another example would be Dwight Macdonald's review in the *New Yorker* of Michael Harrington's book *The Other America*, an account of the (at that time, and now again) all-but-forgotten poor of America. Harrington's book was on the verge of being forgotten, too, when Macdonald's review rescued it, gave it a vogue in government circles, and helped spark the social activism and anti-poverty programs of the 1960s. It would probably be fair to say that nothing published by Macdonald during a long life devoted to political journalism had a greater impact than that one review. His own sensibility doubtless had something to do with its effect, just as Kennan's knowledge of the Soviet Union was partly responsible for his. But in both cases a largely fortuitous factor of timing—an audience's unpredictable readiness to hear that message on that subject—explains why these two articles, on their surface indistinguishable from countless others just as germane, managed to escape the common fate. If the point of political journalism is to join the history of one's time, "to make a contribution," then Kennan and Macdonald have certainly succeeded, and we can stop wondering why men write the stuff, because we've got the answer.

The trouble with the answer is that it subjects the rewards of writing—the things men do it *for*—to a process almost as arbitrary as a lottery. In the back of every writer's mind, at least when he starts out, is the secret hope lightning will strike: he'll find it in him to say the right thing at the right time, and from then on the world will listen. A little fame and ready money would be okay too. Samuel Johnson somewhere describes the delusion of the young writer who imagines, waking on the day his first book is to be published, that all London will be talking about it, and pointing him out on the streets. But it isn't that way. The most frequent remark a writer hears about his book is regret the speaker hasn't had a chance to read it yet. Some writers make a million dollars, some capture the public's fancy and become figures of almost mythic appeal, and some take the establishment by the ears and set the parameters of debate on a subject of importance for years to come. But that isn't the



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common fate and writers are smart enough to know it. The fact so many of them go on writing anyway suggests they have got another, better reason for what they do.

Let me step back a bit here. Like most people, I've got a sense that history is heading somewhere, that big chunks of it—and perhaps even the whole of it—have the roundedness of small chunks. We might take the disturbance of Europe by Napoleon as a paradigm. His career—the circumstances which allowed him to rise, what he did at the height of his power, and the causes of his downfall—can be seen as a single event, a thing with its own inner significance. You're bound to get an argument when you try to say just what the significance is, but that's only because historians are contentious. The attempt to figure it out and put it down strikes most of them as reasonable enough. Other chunks of history have a similar roundedness—the division of the Roman Empire, say, or what Spain did with the gold of Mexico and Peru, or the consequences of introducing slaves into the New World. Such events have something more than a narrative line; they unfold as they do for reasons, in accord with an inner logic. They make sense. Some chunks of history announce themselves clearly, even when you're in the middle of them. The rise of Hitler, for example. Others are obscure, like the industrial revolution. The road from the spinning jenny to the computer is clear enough, but where does it go from here? To the colonization of this galaxy, as a base for the leap to others? It would be nice to think so, but a lot of sensible people think a great industrial crash is at least as likely.

The thing which draws one on is a sense that the logic is there, if one is only smart enough to recognize it. Public questions are like chunks of history in this regard. What happens to the initiatives of government is not arbitrary. Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty did not simply spring from nowhere, but had partisans, opponents, a history and reasons for being, just like the war in Vietnam, which eventually absorbed all the funds that might have allowed the poverty programs to work. The logic in that case fairly grabs the observer by the throat.

We live in history. Everything reaches back into the past. Things are not arbitrary. The future is implicit in the present. We can sense the logic unfolding all around us, in the big things as well as the small—the rise of the car-makers and the oil industry, the collapse of the passenger railroads, the flight to suburbia and disappearance of the family farm, the federal program for Aid to Dependent Children and the death of the central cities, the unification of Germany in the 19th century and its dismemberment in the 20th, the invention of the nuclear bomb and of the missiles to carry it, the collapse of currencies and the rise of gold, the web linking shopping centers, supermarkets and hard tomatoes. We are too cussed, or nimble, to agree why things are as they are, but no one seems to argue they are incomprehensible. Quite the contrary. Just about everybody—and certainly every political journalist—sounds as if he were pretty sure he has got things just about right.

Figuring these things out—like philosophy, chess, pure mathematics, painting, writing poetry, acting—is poorly paid as a rule, and rarely has noticeable consequences, but people do it anyway. We live in meaning as fish live in water. It is the thing which sustains us, and I think it suggests why we write. The scribbling instinct is too strong to be explained as a calculated form of self-advancement, and the chances for success too slim for a rational man to bet his future on it. The tone of most writing suggests it is the most natural thing in the world, as if the finished piece were eagerly awaited and certain to be handsomely rewarded. But in truth the writer is driven; if no one will pay he will write for free, and if no one will publish he will write for the drawer. He can't help himself. Whatever his subject—large in the manner of war, or small in the manner of farm parity—he is goaded forward by the desire to understand in the round what he senses going on around him.

The desire runs deep. Just about everybody has opinions, which suggests that just about everybody is trying to figure things out, some deliberately, and some without quite knowing what they're about, but all trying. One of the things which separates men from other animals, we are told, is the foreknowledge of death. Whether animals are really ignorant I can't say, but it's clear we base our humanity to an important degree on knowing our fate. But our fate as individuals is not necessarily the same thing as our fate as a community, as a culture with a history. That we don't know, although we can sense it unfolding. Sometimes I am gloomy on this point: the love of war and weapons seems to be the central passion of our history, and it is in our nature, where the really important things are involved, to be true till death.

But other guesses are equally reasonable; things may turn out very differently. I read quite a lot of political journalism, trying to keep up, and there seems to be almost as many opinions as writers. The thing we all agree upon—implicitly, as suggested by the fact we are writing at all—is that we are going somewhere, things have meaning, our fate is in large measure our doing, and it will all make much better sense in retrospect. They are not writing for me, and I am not writing for them. The form of political journalism—its public character as a message to the President—is illusory, a convention of genre. In truth the exercise has more in common with keeping a diary. The whole process grows warmer when someone cares enough to protest, amend, refute or clarify, but the silence of the audience doesn't stop us; the discussion simply continues internally, with opponents of our own imagining. We write to learn what we think, to make sense of the inchoate strands of our future, so we may comprehend the nature of our fate, not for any practical purpose—although we contribute what we may, and get from it what we can—but in accordance with our desire to know. Perhaps the world will pay attention; perhaps not. We go on writing long after we learn all that is up in the air. The torrent rises from quite a different spring, a conviction that if we only approach it rightly, we can figure this thing out.

THOMAS POWERS

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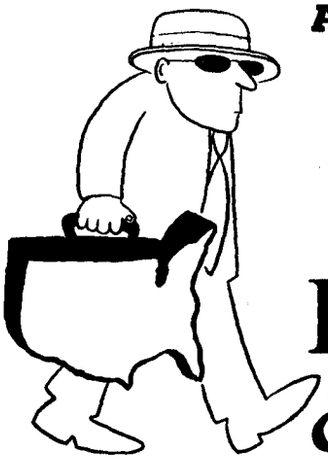
A CASE STUDY IN MARKETING CONSERVATISM



Patriotism, capitalism & positive thinking

THOMAS B. MECHLING

"THE GOLD DUST Twins of the New Conservatism" are what they've been called: Jay Van Andel, 56 and Richard DeVos, 54, chairman and president respectively of the Amway Corporation of Ada, Michigan, a company of a quarter-of-a-million, door-to-door salespersons now after twenty years of operation doing close to a billion dollars yearly in sales of personal products ranging from Vitamin A to drain cleaner to panty hose — making it one of the nation's most successful private firms.

The company has been more than personally and philosophically rewarding to the two co-owners, who as former high school chums together started Amway (short for "American Way") in 1959, wrapping it from its corporate beginnings in Patriotism, Free Enterprise and Positive Thinking with not a little biblical exhortation, not minding that throughout the past twenty years it has often been denounced as being a "quasi-religious socio-political organization."

The frequent Amway sales meetings and conventions — often with more than 20,000 sales distributor persons in attendance — are likely to start with the "Pledge of Allegiance" and wind up with the singing of "God Bless America." The huge and emotional gatherings have been likened to revival meetings and President DeVos, a charismatic speaker, to Billy Graham.

An integral part of Amway's modern, saucer-shaped international headquarters near Grand Rapids is a national teaching and public information bureau called "The Center for Free Enterprise," an impressive showcase for Amway-style capitalism, religious patriotism and American individualism. In addition, through its subsidiary, Amway Communications, the corporation recently bought the conservative-oriented Mutual Broadcasting System of 950 radio stations and is seeking additional media acquisitions. The reasons, as Amway's government relations VP explained the MBS buy, "In addition to a good investment, we have bought an important byproduct — the ability to communicate with the American people."

Fortune magazine estimates that Chairman Van Andel's personal fortune from the American Way is between $300 and $500 million. President DeVos, with his $40,000 green Rolls Royce, is not far behind. Both co-owners and their other top executives share four corporate jets and a 119-foot yacht appropriately named "Enterprise." But more significant perhaps than the material gains, the Gold Dust Twins are equally adept at marketing their fine line of products and right-wing conservatism together, interchangeably wearing their free-enterprise hats and their political jockey caps.

Van Andel, besides being a top fund-raiser for the Michigan Republican Party, is presently serving an active one-year term as chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (84,000 companies, organizations, state and local chambers and individuals), sworn in last May by his good and longtime friend, former U.S. President Gerald Ford. Since then he has seen to it that the Chamber launched a syndicated national TV program and converted its thin newsletter into a full-fledged weekly newspaper with 425,000 circulation.

Van Andel criss-crosses the country urging businessmen to "speak out," participate in panel programs, and generally use the media to argue business's viewpoint. Besides frequently testifying before Congressional hearings in behalf of business, the silver-haired Amway chairman speaks out himself on his favorite theme: "Everyone knows that freedom and free enterprise are like Siamese twins. One cannot live without the other."

Chairman Van Andel was equally aggressive when he was named the first chairman of the Chamber's newly-formed "Citizens Choice" lobby specifically aimed at "stopping big government" and "recapturing Washington for hard-working taxpayers." He promptly saw that ten million people got the message through an extensive direct-mail campaign.

He was also instrumental in persuading fellow Chamber of Commerce board members to send the message to sharehol-

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ders of corporations they head — specifically 44,000 shareholders of Pepsico (via Don Kendall) and 48,000 shareholders of Marriott Corporation (via J. Willard Marriott, Jr.). In part the message was that under the Van Andel chairmanship, the Chamber of Commerce was against the Consumer Protection Agency and Universal Voter Registration, among other legislative proposals, and for the deregulation of natural gas prices. Van Andel is also active in the Taxpayers United Federation, a tax reduction group, and in the Business-Industry Political Action Committee.

PRESIDENT DeVOS packs the other part of the Amway's top-executive political punch with his own jet-assisted national speaking tours and his active membership on the Board of the National Association of Manufacturers and its strategic Communications Advisory Committee. While the primaries were still under way, he had the further distinction of being the subject of a mini-boomlet for "a businessman dark-horse candidate for President of the United States" launched at the suggestion of conservative commentator Paul Harvey.

DeVos's favorite speaking theme is on what he calls the MMW Formula (MMW = NR + HE × T), whereby MMW (Man's Material Welfare) is a product of NR (Natural Resources) plus HE (Human Energy) multiplied by T (Tools), which he says is the most important part of the formula because tools can multiply the amount of work humans do. Thus, according to DeVos, *who* controls the tools has the key to productivity, progress and freedom anywhere in the world. Citizens must decide: Do they want the state to own the tools of production or the private business sector to own the tools — through capital investment in corporation stocks and bonds, banks and life insurance. Socialist nations, DeVos says, by owning the tools, control the people and eventually enslave them. Free Enterprise nations allow their people to be free. (DeVos closed one massive rally of his sales people, following the group-singing of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," by asking; "Which Way Will You Go? Free or Slave? Mediocre or Excellent? Socialism or Capitalism?")

Dow Chemical and other corporations think so highly of DeVos's MMW Formula that they have made a half-hour film and filmstrip of it, with classroom study guides, for use in schools throughout the country, ages fourteen years and up. The Dow version was developed by Edward Strom, an economics teacher in the Midland Public Schools of Midland, Michigan.

The more-visible "Gold Dust Twin" of Amway — DeVos — has for years been the quiet Godfather and financial angel of the Religious Right Movement — a loose coalition of fundamentalist religious groups which equate free enterprise with Christianity, and Christianity with anti-government, right-wing conservatism. The R.R. grouping seeks to save the nation by returning it to God and to a right-wing political program, which are equated as one and the same. It believes that there are at least five million members of 50,000 churches nationwide that can be politicized via their religious affiliation into a highly conservative force in the nation's politics.

The instrumentalities it works through are, first, the right-wing religious groups themselves: the Christian Embassy, the Christian Freedom Foundation ($25,000 personal DeVos contribution in 1974-75), the Campus Crusade for Christ, Third Century Publishers *et al*, . . . and, secondly, the broader-based and better-known conservative groups which support them and their candidates and causes financially, namely: the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, the National Conservative Political Action Committee, the American Conservative Union Victory Fund, and the Public Service Political Action Committee, among others.

The Religious Right's political agenda reads like the heritage of the John Birch Society wrapped in the pages of the bible: wholesale reduction in the federal government's role in providing social services; taxes not used for social reform or for income redistribution; institution of right-to-work laws; return to the gold standard: a balanced budget; increased military spending (against the Communist threat); and withdrawal of support for the United Nations.

The elitist religious rationale for all this: The world's two basic economic systems, socialism and capitalism, are either Christian or pagan. The free enterprise system is a manifestation of the Christian idea of stewardship. The welfare state is contrary to the bible. The free market is the biblical approach to economics. The wealth of the United States has come about because it employed a system of economics based on Christian principles.

DEVOS SAYS he believes in a personal God who made America and men like himself stewards of the world's greatest economic system and of its tremendous wealth. "The free enterprise system," he concluded in his personally written book ("*Believe!—In Free Enterprise*"), "has outperformed, outproduced any other in the world. . . . It is a gift of God to us, and we should understand it, embrace it and believe in it."

In 1975, DeVos and several other conservative businessmen (including John Talcott of Ocean Spray Cranberries and Art De Moss, board chairman of the National Liberty Insurance Corporation) made a significant move to implant their Religious Right views into elective politics. They took control of the tax-exempt Christian Freedom Foundation for the main purposes of using its tax-exempt status for their Religious Right organizing efforts and to feed more funds into Third

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Century's publishing efforts. Art De Moss bluntly if somewhat indiscreetly stated at the time that the purpose of C.F.F. was to elect conservative Christians to Congress.

Third Century publishes two main books, "*One Nation Under God*," the political rationale for the Religious Right which equates scripture with its political platform, and "*In the Spirit of '76*," a handbook for winning elections: "The vision is to rebuild the foundations of the Republic as it was when first-founded—a 'Christian Republic.' We must return to the faith of our fathers."

The Christian grass-roots is being urged to use these books and other communications tools (filmstrips *et al*), being widely distributed in how-to-win-at-politics kits, in eventually building a massive grass-roots, evangelical, conservative political movement. The DeVos-*et-al*,-inspired step was merely to organize on the national level and to raise the necessary funds through personal contacts and private meetings with key business leaders, political leaders and leaders in related church organizations.

In the speeches by its leaders, pastors are being urged directly to personally endorse candidates, to invite Christian candidates deserving conservative support to preach or to offer prayers before their congregations, and to set up voting registration booths in their churches: "Christians should become precinct workers who are door-to-door evangelists."

The ideological and educational kits of the religious groups and their Third Century publishing arm are designed and are being used as "home study kits"—to get people studying in small groups, typically for six weeks. This approach fits well with evangelical Christians' traditional home bible studies.

In the words of Richard Viguerie, the direct-mail genius of the New Right, whose millions of letters raise close to $50 million yearly for conservative candidates and causes, "The next real major area of growth for conservative ideology and political philosophy is among evangelical people." And in the words of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," "His truth is marching on"—in one form or another.

FOR AMWAY's Gold Dust Twins, DeVos and Van Andel, however, the religious and business channels they have set up and/or support for the dissemination of their conservative views, are but additional outside resources to their own. They have their own in-house public information machine in their Center for Free Enterprise and the Free Enterprise Institute.

Besides DeVos's own book, "*Believe!*," the Institute distributes free or at low cost to other corporations and individuals, such books and booklets as Henry Hazlitt's "*Economics in One Lesson*" (discussing the hidden cost of public works), Henry Grady Weaver's "*Mainspring of Human Progress*" (tracing the development of free enterprise and why some societies advance beyond others), "*The Incredible Bread Machine*" (how free enterprise and free markets offer solutions to current societal problems), "*Alternatives*" (a series of short articles suitable for pay-envelope stuffers or handouts), "*Our Economic System*" (reprints of *Reader's Digest* articles), and "*Choice, an Activity Book for Teachers*" (telling teachers how to incorporate economics into the classroom at every different grade and subject level).

In addition, Amway's Institute offers such classroom visual teaching aids for grades 4 through 8, 9 through 12, and ages 14 and up, as: "*Freedom 2000*" (describing how economic and personal freedoms are interdependent), "*Free Enterprise—What's That?*" (described as "an objective animated cartoon pointing out the benefits of the free market system"), and, of course, DeVos's "*Man's Material Welfare*" presentation in 27-minute color films and video cassettes, 12-minute slide films, and 20-minute audio cassettes.

Backing up these visual classroom aids are printed teachers' and discussion-leaders' guides of suggested review questions and questions for discussion, such as:

1. Why do people in the United States supposedly take more pride in the tools of society than people in the Soviet Union?
2. Why are poor people in the United States relatively better off?
3. Why are material things so important?
4. How does the private ownership of society's tools make the free enterprise system more productive than the socialist system?
5. Why doesn't price-fixing by government work?
6. Is there a meaningful difference between what is called socialism and communism? Are they similar enough to say that only two major systems exist, socialism and capitalism?

Like Mobil Oil, Amway spends more of its advertising and PR budget trying to get its ideological views across than in selling its products. And like Mobil, its 3-column x 10-inch cartoon-and-copy "op-ed" ads are almost as ubiquitous and often in the same place as Mobil's in major newspapers throughout the country. Recent headings: "Inflation—The Price We Pay When Government Won't Say 'No!,'" "The Federal Nanny. Domestic Help We Can't Afford.," "Controls: The Wrong Medicine for the Wrong Patient.," "Regulatory Overkill! The Branch that's Threatening the Tree.," "Why There's No Such Thing as a Free Lunch.," "The Energy Solution? Get Government Out of the Business.," "Debunking the Inflation Myth. Higher prices and higher wages are the result of inflation, not the cause."

At the other end of the scale, Amway subsidizes a little newsletter that unfolds into a poster called the "*Ada Report*"—"published as a tribute to those American who live in Ada, Louisiana, Ada, Iowa . . . and all the other communities like Ada."

It is sent free to anybody who wants it, and specifically to the president, 100 senators, 435 representatives and the 50 state governors "so they can read for themselves the message that hard-working people want to send them." The message is the newsletter's logo: A pretzel—"a long, straight piece of dough that's all bent out of shape . . . like what too much government's doing to us today: bending us all out of shape, twisting and contorting the way we live and work."

The Amway chiefs are expanding their efforts year-by-year

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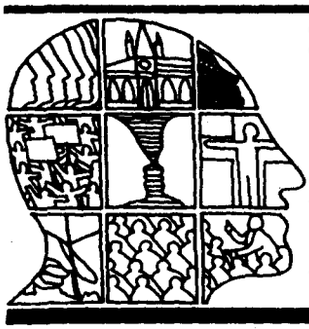
to get their views of economics taught in the classrooms. Last year Amway organized a series of two-week summer workshops for teachers in 60 cities. In a graduate credit course accepted by most Michigan colleges and universities the teachers were taught six important economic concepts, why those concepts should be taught in their classrooms, and how to integrate the concepts into the curriculums for which the teachers were individually responsible. Amway describes the results as "an excellent success in increasing teacher economic literacy."

The Amway Gold Dust Twins are most preoccupied with their own version and demonstrated success of the American Dream as they see it: of personal riches through hard work without government interference. Their heaviest denunciation of government comes down on the interfering regulatory agencies, one of which—the Federal Trade Commission—has been particularly embarrassing to Amway. Since 1975, the F.T.C. has been saying that Amway's sales plan was "a scheme to pyramid distributors upon ever-increasing numbers of other distributors," that it was "doomed to failure," and that it contained an "intolerable potential to deceive." It further charged that Amway was guilty of price-fixing, restricting the activities of its sales distributors by preventing them from selling in retail stores, and misrepresenting the potential opportunities for their success. However, last May, the F.T.C. dismissed most of its allegations against Amway to focus on its prohibition against the company from fixing prices and requiring Amway to include accurate information about potential earnings when soliciting new sales people.

A really Christian idea too. For although a relatively few of Amway's direct distributors can make as much as $100,000 a year, the odds against reaching the level are coolly calculated at 1000 to 1, three out of every four of Amway sales distributors quit after the first year, and the average earnings for those who stay is about $125 a month.

And even the Gold Dust Twins of the New Conservatism would admit that's no way to acquire a $40,000 green Rolls Royce any time soon.



REJECTING THE RELIGION OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Halfway back

FRANK S. ZEPEZAUER

THE CHAPLAIN seemed half asleep when I first saw him at 6:45 A.M. My sense of urgency had summoned him from his bed an hour before his regular time.

He came down the steps at the Newman Center of the University of Chicago on a March morning that would begin the spring quarter of the 1948-49 academic year, my first at this influential secular institution. His face reflected tension between duty and annoyance. He served the needs of a frequently embattled Catholic minority, but not very often before breakfast.

Nevertheless he recovered enough priestly demeanor to greet me: "Good morning. I'm Father Connerton. What can I do for you?"

"They said I should see you first thing," I replied, watching him fasten his Roman collar. I had never before seen that symbol of clerical authority in such casual disarray.

"Who did?", he asked, finishing with the collar and arranging his cincture.

"The priests back at Marquette. When they heard about my transfer to Chicago, they said I might lose my faith."

As Father Connerton struggled with a blossoming yawn, I continued with, "They wanted me to see the Newman chaplain as early as possible."

Now his annoyance momentarily broke through. "Well, you certainly made it early enough," he said. The angry flare-up in his eyes alarmed me. I started to apologize, but held back when his eyes softened. In better control of his impatience, he asked, "Do you want some coffee?"

I nodded with a silence that projected not only embarrassment but also, at a deeper level, sharp hostility. I didn't like overbearing, sarcastic priests. I had seen my share of them.

His Roman collar blended at that moment with an image formed years before. The collar in my memory offered the only spot of white in a sea of red fabric which flooded over the figure of our parish pastor. I remember him visiting our classroom smoking a fat cigar, his monsignorial robes stretched tightly against his ample belly. He snorted and growled and terrorized the children as the nun stood nearby with a rigid helpless smile. I still picture him as a red volcano rumbling and puffing with its importance.

The steaming cup of coffee which Father Connerton now offered me dispelled the image but not the feeling. His own cup quickly drained away his morning grouchiness, and we started a friendly visit between a well-informed campus chaplain and a new student whose nice Catholic boy behavior concealed an intense rebellion against priestly authority.

However, I did not openly rebel that morning, nor for many

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years thereafter, even though I would debate almost daily with brilliant agnostics and would taste, on that urban and urbane campus, many pagan pleasures. Despite the fears of my former Jesuit teachers, I left the formidable University of Chicago still firmly committed to the church. My rebelliousness toward it simmered and boiled up frequently but other feelings prevailed. I regarded the church as a family. To leave it, I felt, would be an act of personal betrayal.

Yet I write now as an apostate who eventually left the church and then, some time later, made another turn which puts me today "halfway back." My experience thus adds one more incident to a larger story whose theme focuses on the church's current crisis of authority.

My particular contribution to its crisis occurred eighteen years after I had nervously consulted the campus chaplain. Presumably grooved into a mid-twentieth century kind of Catholic life, my wife and I stayed with the church even during the travail of the approved method of birth control which brought us four children in six years, rhythmically.

Yet one day my rebellion finally broke through. A very earnest and pious priest unwittingly released it as he preached his Sunday sermon. He served as assistant to a Palo Alto, California congregation not far from where I worked teaching high school English. Slightly built, thin-faced and pale—you would see that face in countless paintings of dedicated monks—he delivered Catholic doctrine like a schoolmaster conjugating Latin verbs.

On that Sunday, he lectured on obedience. I recall him saying, "Ultimately you don't need faith. You don't need religious education. You don't need reason."

I sat up to listen more attentively because he posed an intriguing riddle: what value could exceed education, reason, *and* faith?

He continued. "God revealed to the church the facts of existence and the laws of morality. The church in turn reveals these truths to the faithful. Thus by following the law of the church, you follow the law of God . . ."

I sensed what was coming.

"All you need, therefore, is the disposition to obey. Your highest duty is *obedience*."

He then returned to the altar. After the Mass I walked out of the mission-style stucco building and never again returned to a Catholic church as a serious worshipper. What he said finally sent me on the way in a direction toward which I had long tilted. I had, after all, lost my faith.

And my decision was activated by the overweening words of authority: "*I* say that you *must* . . ." At the moment in my mind I replied, "Who are *you* to tell *me*?" Like the modern suburban secularists with whom I had lived for eighteen years, I assumed the primacy of my individual conscience. I would not submit either to a cassock full of volcanic ego or of pedantic piety.

I THEN ENTERED a peculiar apostasy, peculiar because my Catholic nerves kept me close to my roots. I felt little need, for example, to join those frequently publicized apostates who celebrated their "liberation" by narrating the horrors of their oppressive Catholic upbringing. Yet, for the most part, my wife and I settled into a nonreligious mode of living. We sent our children to public schools, told them nothing of religion, vibrated in unison with our suburban friends to a succession of liberal causes and believed that we connected with the best informed modern thought.

Then one day about seven years ago, I turned around once again and started to go back to the church. The person who activated my second apostasy was a minister in the Unitarian church.

I met him in the holy land of the counter-culture, a redwood forest in California's Mendocino County. He and his wife served as counselors for the Unitarian Fellowship which gathered at a family camp once a year. The Rev. W., a well-built man of medium height with wavy silver hair, carried himself with the formal dignity of an older Massachusetts where Unitarianism was born and once flourished. At the camp, he set up a daily discussion group and made himself available for drop-in talks. His always helpful and charming wife spent most of the work/holiday sitting nearby with her knitting.

Yet he had relatively little ministerial business that week. I soon discovered why. My family, which had joined the Fellowship the year before, arrived on Sunday and were assigned separate cabins. Although they called it a "family" camp, the directors split the family unit and distributed its members to various peer groups.

In fact, people belonging to conventional families comprised the minority of campers. Most of the others formed broken families or common law arrangements. The rest were single, divorced, or separated.

We quickly adapted to a new etiquette which accommodated the variety of ad hoc relationships. When someone described a companion as his "friend," that settled matters. The devout tolerance informing the etiquette also prevented parents from prying into the activities of the peer group cabins. Nor did anyone in a cafeteria line react when a man greeted a newcomer with the news that "there was plenty of sex around, single and married." Marijuana smoke mingled throughout the week with the scent of the redwoods; at the evening sing-a-longs children as young as eight puffed away on the community pipe.

We could also visit the "free beach" which in California-ese meant "going nude." My wife and I incidentally, kept our bathing suits on, not so much from modesty as from vanity. Nudity discriminates against the pudgy.

I review these details not to exercise your prudery or to disparage the campers whose tolerance also bred a friendly warmth. In fact, they were marvelously skilled at every relationship except marriage.

These incidents fascinated me, however, because they connected with a value system I could not fathom. For all their apparent tolerance toward hitherto proscribed behavior, the campers exhibited stern disapproval in other matters.

I discovered this one day early in the week when I went

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upstream from the beach to wash my hair. In the midst of my shampoo, I glimpsed through the blinding suds a figure approaching me. I cleared my eyes and saw before me an attractive young woman about 19 years old. Apart from a shell necklace, she wore nothing.

The fussbudgets who supervised my earlier training had not prepared me for encounters with naked young ladies in clear mountain streams. But before I could compose myself, I observed that she was very angry.

"That soap you're using will pollute the water. There are people downstream who want to use it," she began in that never-shout undertone which I call the counter-culture mumble.

I brushed away some of the offending suds and saw with dismay that several fell into the swift current rushing them to the downstream bathers. I hoped she wouldn't notice.

I tried to fashion a funny response: "But this soap is biodegradable. No detergents at all. I swear." I did not amuse her. She never relinquished her initial indignation.

"Look, all you have to do is to get two buckets and wash you hair up on shore."

"I don't *have* any buckets," I replied.

"Well, anyone around here would *lend* you some."

No wimple-crowned nun in full habit ever generated the moral outrage of this naked young woman.

I felt abashed. I began to feel guilty. I had sinned.

Against what commandments, I wondered? Perhaps the Rev. W. back at the main hall could finally enlighten me. Yet by this time he seemed an anachronism. The spiritual descendant of the ferocious Puritans, he sat on the periphery of the camp's neo-pagan revelry ministering to an ever-dwindling congregation. By mid-week when I pressed him to explain, once and for all, what his religion stood for, I alone remained in his discussion group.

Because present-day Unitarianism dogmatically rejected dogma, he could not help me locate its essence, at least not in the way an ex-Catholic would want it. But during the course of the week the mysterious ethic of the campers together with a persistent drift in his talk nevertheless moved me toward a significant insight.

It opened in me one afternoon as we sat talking. My oldest son, Mark, walked by and I called him over for an introduction. In the small talk that followed I said, "Mark acted in a number of school plays. Just last month his group performed *The Night Thoreau Stayed in Jail*. He played the role of Emerson." Rev. W. perked up. Emerson to him was like Ignatius to a Jesuit.

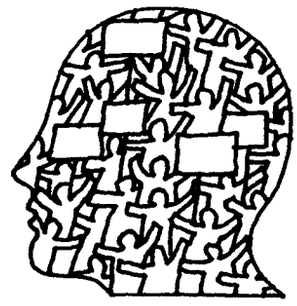
He turned to Mark and asked. "Do you remember any lines?"

After a moment's reflection Mark recited Emerson's best known words: "Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind."

The good Reverend now built an impromptu sermon around the famous text connecting his troubled Unitarianism to the great Puritan/Protestant tradition of courageous dissent, its constant push toward the cutting edge of change, its noble defense of the individual against civil and ecclesiastical tyranny.

I followed closely because I sensed once again that a man of the cloth was approaching a central value.

And as I listened, the insight which had been forming all week finally crystalized into an idea: Unitarianism had



metamorphosed into liberalism and liberalism had evolved beyond a method of inquiry and a source of reformist energy to become a non-theistic religion. I named it "the religion of the individual."

I later learned that Protestant fundamentalists, who deeply distrust it, call it "secular humanism." They regard it with some justification as the American civil religion. No wonder then, that the Rev. W. spoke so proudly of his faith. As a Unitarian he served a dying sect, but as a liberal he professed a faith which dominated our culture.

In that same moment I also found that I disliked the "religion of the individual," a paradoxical attitude for someone who rejected Catholicism to foster his individuality.

In trying to resolve that paradox I have come to this halfway back position. What I say from this point thus summarizes what I have learned and thought about since I walked out of that Unitarian camp seven years ago.

AS WITH my earlier response to the church, I did not break formally with the loosely organized religion of the individual although now, as before, my surface compliance masked another inner conflict which began as I drove home along the beautiful Pacific coast and reflected over my recent experiences. Looking now in a new way at the modernist religion which surrounded me, I felt that it was hollow.

The feeling came first. Only later did I work with it rationally. And my recollection of Emerson and his colleague Thoreau, today's canonized saints of individualism, opened the internal debate. For we often hear their fiery assertions of personal freedom, but we seldom hear about their profound sense of higher reality.

In his beautiful meditation on a universal spirit which he called "The Oversoul" Emerson, for example, said, "I . . . acknowledge a higher origin for events than the will I call mine."

This same reverential sense of higher reality permeates the writing of Thoreau. After all, he and Emerson initiated a

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movement called "Transcendentalism." His essay, *Civil Disobedience*, which now serves as sacred scripture for devout individualists, does not, as many believe, oppose the state in the name of individual, but instead opposes the individual to the state in the name of a higher law derived from "purer sources of truth."

Although we see them now as rebellious dissenters, thorns in the side of the nineteenth century establishment, their abiding sense of transcendent reality connected them with a powerful theistic tradition which has only in the past one hundred years been broken, at least among avant-garde liberals. In its place we confront a modernist faith which divorces God from the world, fact from value, the individual from community, and produces an aggregate of rootless beings characterized by T. S. Eliot as "hollow men."

At the moment I perceived the vacuum at the center of that faith, I also found that I resented its authority because I felt its weight constantly but could not locate its source. In contrast to Monsignor Red Volcano, who in spite of his ego always made clear where he stood and where he fitted in, the dogmatists of the religion of the individual disclaimed personal authority and power, preached a do-your-own-thing tolerance and yet manipulated our culture with an efficiency that would excite the envy of a medieval pope.

But then, it occurred to me, few popes, particularly today, so thoroughly control the secular universities and the popular media, the instruments by which the modernist consensus is shaped and transmitted. Without formal organization the religion of the individual can nevertheless command a vast congregation by creating peer pressures, quickly disseminated beliefs that a particular cause is where it's at, where it's going, and where it's got to be.

So once again I restlessly confronted authority but as before, held back from a clear-cut decision until a relatively minor incident goaded me to action. I was watching a TV panel discussion on abortion between four feminists and a young priest, when I experienced a shift in perspective. The priest, a modernist symbol of the ecclesiastic tyranny, could not progress against the iron certitude and social power of the "right to choose."

Finally, one of the women articulated her indignation: "How can men in the hierarchy dictate to a woman about what she can do with her own body? That's arrogant."

Her voice communicated an assurance of authority which I had encountered many times before and always detested. And so it seemed that between the assertive pro-abortionists and the outnumbered priest, I faced a choice between one form of authority and another.

I chose the priest. From the new perspective that this little scene created, I saw his authority checked by a network of restraints: his clerical vows, the introspective illumination of his prayer, the moderating tradition of study, meditation, and discussion to which he deferred, the awesome and demanding principle of humility which he professed and his responsibility to a spiritual community centered in God.

I was not so sure what restrained the individualists who believed that everyone should choose his own values and decide for himself what is right and wrong. Nor did I trust them. They preached tolerance but imposed their values nevertheless.

Ultimately I chose the priest because he did not speak for an "I", but for a "we."

And I rejected the religion of the individual because I recalled at that moment the words of my favorite liberal, Emerson, who said, "The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself. All reform aims to let the soul have its way through us; in other words to *engage us to obey*."

That interpretation of the need for obedience still leaves many questions in my mind. I am far from reconciled with priestly authority, or with any other authority for that matter, but few of us are. The question of moral authority and our eventual submission to it connects us with an enourmous mystery which leaves us struggling with doubt.

But I've learned to live with doubt. If God granted us certitude, we would not need faith.

Stage

MINUS THE MENACE

PINTER'S NEW-OLD HOTHOUSE

HAROLD PINTER'S latest play, *The Hothouse*, began at Hampstead, the enterprising London theater which first produced *The Elephant Man* and which recently offered Sam Shepard's *Buried Child* to baffled English audiences (baffled English reviewers really). *The Hothouse* moved on to a successful West End run and, presumably, if matters follow their usual course, it will soon find its way to New York.

Not that the latest Pinter play is a new play. *The Hothouse* was written in 1958, Pinter says in a program note, and put aside until 1979 when he reread it, decided it was stageworthy and "made a few cuts but no changes." It is, then, the second full-length Pinter play, and it is hardly surprising that, having not yet looked at the program, I found myself thinking of *The Birthday Party* all through the first act, a spontaneous comparison by which *The Hothouse* suffers. The titular hothouse is an institution to which the Ministry, unidentified, assigns patients who are apparently never cured. The man with the van from *The Birthday Party* has come with a vengeance; the mysterious Monty, to whom Stanley is taken in that play, has been transformed into a bureaucracy. There is a scene in *The Hothouse* in which a young staff member, a garrulous innocent, is broken by two colleagues in a cross-question routine that recalls the verbal assault on Stanley by Goldberg and McCann. In the new play, the interrogators are offstage voices and the victim is isolated in a glass booth; all this sci-fi

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paraphernalia robs the scene of the intensity which the presence of three actors on stage gave the early play. Stylistic devices aside, *The Hothouse* seems to belong with *The Birthday Party* because, like *Party*, it offers the kind of incipient social/political comment that made early Pinter enthusiasts try to reduce his plays to messages. In the program for the first American production of a Pinter play, the Actor's Workshop production of *The Birthday Party* in San Francisco (1960), there is a director's note in which Glynne Wickham gives a very explicit social interpretation of the play. It would be easy to treat *The Hothouse* in the same way.

The hothouse is hot in fact, since the steamheat is on full blast although the day is a mild one (a line about the snow's turning to slush is used repeatedly, a joke and a weapon), but the title is obviously intended to suggest an artificial enclosure, forcing growth unnaturally. The plants that grow here are tensions among the staff; the play is a round robin of confrontation scenes in which first one, then another of the characters dominates through politely threatening speeches or by a refusal to react to such speeches. Two events among the patients — a death and a birth — bring the situation to a head, and the play ends with an epilogue in which we learn that the entire staff, except for the assistant director, has been murdered, presumably by the patients. The audience, schooled in horror movies, knows (or suspects) that the icily menacing Gibbs did in his own colleagues, but since this is a Pinter play, details of the plot remain elusive.

Significance seekers should have a marvelous time with the play because the characters are given names like Roote (the director who is stabbed; cut out root and . . .), Lamb (the innocent victim), Miss Cutts, Lush; and, furthermore since the action takes place on Christmas day and the father of the newborn baby is unknown. I suppose that there is a serious statement about the interchangeability of inmates and staff, of the certifiably sick and the presumably healthy, but to me *The Hothouse* is largely an elaborate joke which does not work very well. Pinter's use of conventional mystery-story elements in plays like *The Birthday Party* and *The Dumb Waiter* was successfully transformed into that unanchored sense of fear, at once funny and frightening, which saddled him with the label, *comedy of menace*, that he spent years trying to escape. *The Hothouse* unhappily suggests parody without menace. Only occasionally does one of the playwright's characteristic duels of understatement manufacture theatrical electricity, and there is only one extended speech which can be compared favorably with the best of early Pinter. This speech, in which Lush reports on his conversation with the dead patient's mother, is a catalogue of English countryside festivities, occasions on which the woman somehow failed to appear at the asylum. It suggests the interior-decoration monologue in *The Caretaker* and like that speech, it is a very funny turn in which the comic content exists outside the aggressive use for which the speaker is fashioning his words. For the most part, however, *The Hothouse* is more interesting as a sample of early Pinter work than it is as a play in its own right.

Going to London theater in the summer is rather like going to Broadway during the same season. A play like *The Hothouse* is available only because it is packaged as summer fun; or so insist the quotations from reviews that placard the theater. The usual choices are among celebrated musicals, long-run farces, and posh revivals. A particular English offering, less familiar in this country, is the star's play, the work that seems to have been stitched together as an excuse to allow a popular performer to take the stage. I saw two examples when I passed through London recently, Tom Courtenay in Ronald Harwood's *The Dresser*, and Glenda Jackson in Andrew Davies's *Rose*. Courtenay plays a drunken homosexual theatrical dresser trying to get a dying Shakespearean actor on stage for one last Lear. The play is a stultifying collection of show-business bromides, bearable only when Courtenay is onstage and talking. Glenda Jackson is better served by the Davies script about a teacher, stifled by her school administration, who is also a woman trapped in a dead marriage. The central assumption of *Rose*, that life consists of inevitable personal and professional failure, is countered by the quirky idealism of the protagonist, the witty delineation of some of the peripheral characters (notably Rose's old mum) and a fine ironic performance by Jackson. Without her, *Rose* would probably turn into the soap opera it occasionally aspires to be, but one doesn't go to see *Rose;* one goes to see Glenda Jackson.

GERALD WEALES

Screen

FASHION STATEMENT

HITCHCOCK AS PRECOCIOUS TEENAGER

BRIAN DE PALMA's *Dressed to Kill* plays with time in much the same way that one of the characters in the film, a precocious teenager, tinkers with electronic gadgets. In some scenes De Palma distends our sense of time, stretching out seconds into agonizing minutes. In other scenes he telescopes the action so that everything seems to be happening at once. The result is that De Palma, like the teenager, impresses us as being a terribly clever fellow, but one whose inventions do seem in the end a bit superfluous, even frivolous. As both writer and director of the movie, De Palma has clearly created this boy, Peter Miller (Keith Gordon), in his own image. Peter is about as close as the movie comes to having a hero. At one point he even makes a movie of his own which manipulates time relationships just as *Dressed to Kill* does.

The movie Peter makes is actually a bit of amateur sleuthing, an act of surveillance. It is of the patients who visit the office of his mother's psychiatrist, Dr. Elliott (Michael Caine). What Peter does is to ride his Moped into the city one day to Elliott's brownstone and lurk about on the sidewalk timing the patients' arrivals and departures. From this he

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determines how frequently they occur. Next he drafts elaborate drawings and plans from which he constructs a movie camera that will shoot time-lapse pictures automatically while concealed in a box on the back of the Moped. He parks the Moped so the camera will be aimed at Elliott's door, and afterwards he looks at the movie in the company of a hooker named Elizabeth (Nancy Allen) who is also in on the case. Among the jerky, flickering forms of Elliott's patients emerging from his office, Peter and Elizabeth find, as they hoped they would, a transvestite whom they know to be a psychopathic killer!

Pretty neat, huh? There's only one problem: who needs it? Why didn't Peter just check out Elliott's patients with his own eyes while he was timing their comings and goings? Why did he have to go through all this complicated business of making the movie? The same question might be asked of De Palma himself.

The distortions of time that result from De Palma's own machinations with a movie camera do provide his film with at least a few extraordinary scenes. One that seems to elongate the action occurs when Peter's mother, Kate (Angie Dickinson), allows herself to be picked up by a man at an art museum. The scene doesn't really drag out the action so much as include little incidental details of a sort that reality always contains, but movies seldom do. At first Kate just sits trying to concentrate on the paintings, though actually more involved in jotting down reminders in her appointment book. Gradually she is distracted by the people in the room. She notices a young couple being affectionate with each other. She smiles at the advances a man makes to another woman in the gallery. When a man sits down next to her, she goes through one of those nervous, self-conscious adjustments of her posture to which we all resort when we suddenly find ourselves in close proximity to a stranger. She ooches over a little, crosses, then uncrosses her ankles, taps the floor with her shoe a bit.

At last she decides to turn and give the fellow a smile, to encourage him. But when she does, she sees he's paying no attention to her. Offended, she now decides she will definitely discourage him, so she takes off her glove and begins fingering her wedding ring. When she turns again to see whether this hasn't finally caught his attention, she discovers that it has: he's left. Now she's really upset and jumps up to go find him, dropping her glove in the process. As the two of them play cat and mouse, pursuing one another through the galleries, the scene becomes more and more antic. At one point he puts on the glove she's dropped. At another point, she throws away the one she still has. In the end the scene comes to a climax, literally, in the back seat of a cab.

What this scene tries to work up to is a certain hallucinatory quality. The whole drama of the flirtation is, at least at first, only in Kate's mind, and the scene tries to retain and intensify that feeling of paranoia. In fact, the entire movie is an attempt to dress action in veils of illusion, to smudge the line betweem fantasy and reality. That's the film's downfall. In a few scenes like the one at the art museum, De Palma's expressionism is mesmerizing. But it soon becomes apparent that this virtuosity exists in the film independent of plot and character, neither of which benefit from it. It produces scenes which have only a kind of fun-house thrill to them. They leap out at us from some unseen niche in the wall as we feel our way blindly through De Palma's story.

The very first scene tries to plunge us into that state of disorientation which De Palma hopes he can keep renewing throughout the rest of the film. In it, Kate is standing in the shower masturbating as she watches her husband shave with a straight razor at the sink. All at once another man grabs her menacingly from behind, and then, just as abruptly, she is lying in bed with her husband on top of her having a bash. Only several reels later do we figure out that the shower sequence was just a fantasy with which she was trying to get herself excited during her husband's inept lovemaking. De Palma's purpose in the opening is to tantalize and shock us—to mystify us—so that he will have us in his power right away. But like much of what follows, the actual effect is only one of unnecessary confusion.

Although there is in the film's credits no acknowledgement of Alfred Hitchcock, that opening scene in the shower might have tipped us off that what we are watching here is a re-make of *Psycho*. While he re-arranges the relationship among the characters somewhat, De Palma sticks in outline pretty close to the Hitchcock classic. He even ends with a reprise of Hitchcock's coda, the worst scene in *Psycho*, where a psychiatrist explains to everyone the nature of the killer's schizophrenia. At least, this scene *ought* to be the end of *Dressed to Kill*. De Palma has used up Hitchcock's plot and really has no place else to go. But he forges ahead anti-climactically anyway, determined to wring yet another nightmarish murder scene out of his material. This extension De Palma has built on to Hitchcock's plot only serves to show how flimsy De Palma'a own ideas are. Like too much else in *Dressed to Kill*, this final exercise in atmospherics, thrills and violence seems merely gratuitous.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

Dance

EMIGRE BALLET

SOCIALIST REALISM BY ANY OTHER NAME

THE IRONIC FATE of those dancers who have left Russia, legally or illegally, is to carry the Soviet esthetic with them. They may have left the system but the system has not left them. Valery Panov, who was persecuted for a year and a half after he applied for permission to emigrate six years ago, has found a niche for himself as artistic director of the Berlin Ballet and in the past three years has choreographed three productions for them. The latest and most elaborate is "The Idiot," based on the Dostoyevsky novel and seen first in

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the United States during the company's July season at New York's Metropolitan Opera House.

Panov's "Idiot" is a lavish spectacle, operatic in its density of plot—three acts and sixteen scenes—and dramatic in its extensive use of mime. It is actually necessary to read two densely printed pages of program notes to grasp the narrative, which is advanced for the most part by unimaginably pedestrian choreography. Panov's own brooding intensity is given full rein in the part of Rogozhin, but his concept of acting is more akin to the cartoon aspects of melodrama than to the subtler nuances of contemporary stagecraft. The leer is broadened to a grimace, the smile slashes into a savage rictus, and the glance emerges as an intense stare. A full evening of this overacting however has the peculiar ability to lose its nineteenth century quality and become almost, but not quite, normal.

Rudolf Nureyev as the "idiot" Prince Myshkin, in fact a "clown of God," emerges with considerable honor from this overblown production. His physical skills are less than they once were, but the loss has little effect when he is projecting an essentially mime role. His portrayal of Myshkin is that of a childlike innocent adrift in a conniving world, represented most forcefully by Rogozhin. His gentle nature is assaulted by physical illness, epilepsy, murderous pursuit by Rogozhin; eventually he ends in a hallucinatory state of nervous collapse, swinging from the rope of a huge bell as the world is consumed in flames.

Panov sees the Dostoyevsky story as a struggle for the soul of Russia between a barren materialist society and people like himself, possessed by religious conviction and fervor. But "The Idiot" is, in truth, a production that the officially godless Bolshoi or Kirov, Panov's own former company, could quite happily have mounted. (The bellrope scene was actually used in the Bolshoi's "Ivan the Terrible.") Their interpretation, of course, would stress the capitalist Rogozhin's ravenous greed and moral terpitude—and yet would still be perfectly consistent with what appears here on the stage. They would present the ballet with the same elaborate production values and dance it as melodramatically, even do so with a shade more conviction than can most of the members of the Berlin Ballet, who have been tainted with the twentieth century. Panov's is essentially a Soviet ballet, mounted in the West with the best of intentions but as out of touch with contemporary sensibility as is the whole socialist realist esthetic. Panov has announced that he is already thinking of "War and Peace" as the subject of his next ballet.

Alice Price

Landscape Of The Dancer

Poised, the foot above
the supple floor finds
its center inside a
blue sphere; movement
comes from time's
hesitation.

Thus, the waterfall,
under the hand of the
Chinese painter, cascades
in silence; a tree emerges
on a lower path to shape
itself from the bottom up.

Nureyev's "The Nutcracker" is a Freudian interpretation of the familiar child's story and has old Drosselmeyer transformed into the young prince, friends and relatives into bats, and Christmas Eve into a coming-of-age ritual. The music simply does not support such an interpretation, and the best parts of the production are those pure dance episodes that stud its two acts. The "Snowflakes" divertissement is by far the most effective and owes much to Vainonen's Kirov setting of the scene.

It was a particular pleasure to see Robert Blankshine, a former Joffrey dancer, in the cleanly danced "Pastorale" variation with Janet Popelski and Linda Thorp. Nureyev partnered Eva Evdokimova as Clara; she is a lyrical, romantic dancer of special grace. Nureyev has eliminated some of the more difficult moves, such as the one-legged balance while supporting the ballerina on his own hip, that he choreographed for his younger abilities; but he still manages to project considerable intensity to his audience. There is however an unpleasant driven quality to his dancing which can look like ebullience but in essence is a frantic rush to get all of the steps in, no matter how untidily. He does, but with a considerable loss in line.

The final program consisted of a mixed bill featuring a new work from Hans van Manen, "Five Tangos." The seven couples departed from the stylish social dance in a series of "balletic" episodes that did not, however, develop the tango in any organic way. They returned to the keystone back bends and crouched walks of the original. It was tastefully crafted though scarcely memorable, and Dianne Bell was sensuously taut with Nureyev.

Galina Panova demonstrated her stature as a world class dancer in everything that she did, especially as Miss Julie in Birgit Cullberg's ballet of the same name. Her turns are crisp, the bearing noble, and her overall presentation glittering. The company's settings, ordinarily quite sumptuous, were a bit hazy and impressionistic in complete contrast to the firm hard-edged originals of Sven Erixon's. The program included the Don Quixote Pas de Deux, or rather Panov's version of it which is remote from the original and emerged as a tasteless show piece. John Cranko's "The Firebird" never settled its basic tonality as either parody of the original Fokine production or a reinterpretation. Despite Evdokimova's finely phrased mythical bird, the ballet never established itself. The company itself has some fine dancers but, despite its outstanding production capabilities, is less than world class technically.

DON McDONAGH

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'YOUR MANIA FOR SENTENCES HAS DRIED UP YOUR HEART'

The family idiot

SAUL MALOFF

INCOMPARABLE Romantic operatics, nineteenth-century French version: art, death, rapturous if brief reconcilations, a very strange affair from its beginnings fairly bursting with the seeds of its own annihilation. The lady's importunings could not possibly avail against his resolve to preserve himself. When her insistence became intolerable, he simply closed her out of his life with a brutal abruptness, telling her, in a brief, icy note, that he would never be "in" to her if she were to visit. Across the notepaper she wrote "poltroon, coward, cur"—and there it ended. Mme. Flaubert, his mother, knew where her peculiar son's true passion lay: "Your mania for sentences," she told him, to his immense pleasure, "has dried up your heart," which he himself spoke of as his "impotent heart." Luckily, oh how luckily, for us, Flaubert much preferred to conduct his affair with Louise Colet by mail, she in Paris, he in Croisset, the small town outside his native Rouen, where he lived with his mother sealed up against the world for much of his life, engaged in the making of perfect sentences, sometimes shouting them—literally shouting them!—at the top of his lungs as he composed. These are the celebrated letters, a selection of them, the best known of the entire archive of his correspondence, the first volume * of a projected two based on the definitive Pléiade edition now in progress; best known, of course, because Flaubert wrote them throughout the years 1851-56, the *Madame Bovary* years, as a kind of contrapuntal accompaniment to the novel, a record for posterity, as it turned out, of the tortured progress of the novel that would forever alter the history of the genre and of modern literature and sensibility. Two great coups at one stroke so to speak: the masterpiece he knew he was writing as he was writing during working hours (except when he was hating life and cursing fate at the end of a bad day's work: "I feel waves of hatred for the stupidity of my age," he wrote his dearest friend, Louis Bouilhet. "They choke me. Shit keeps coming into my mouth, as from a strangulated hernia . . . I want to make a paste of it and daub it over the nineteenth century . . ."—and the great book he wrote late at night out of some mysterious source of unexpended energy miraculously available to him when by rights he should have lain drowned in drugged sleep: these letters to the inconsequential versifier who performed the supreme repository function of receiving and replying to them.

No matter how often one reads them—and we've grown up on them, they are among the sacred texts of our literary cultures—each time they're as startlingly fresh as if just conceived. yet Flaubert could not have deliberated endlessly over them as he did over each phrase, each word, of the novel; there wasn't time for that: presumably he wrote them rapidly, at night, often on successive nights; but by then he was, on the evidence of the most casual of them, simply incapable of writing a bad, half-considered, ill-fashioned sentence if his life depended on it. It is awesome: his life did depend on it—literally, one feels; in any case ours as a nation did: "Perish the United States, rather than a principle!" he cried out, mystifyingly, in a literary letter to a friend. "May I die like a dog rather than hurry by a single second a sentence that isn't ripe!" The irrevocable break with Louise Colet came at what may have been a good time for him but it was a bad one for literary history: perhaps a third of the novel remained to be written, and his progress through its agonies as a result of their severed relations is left largely unrecorded.

From the beginning he was marked: slow to learn his letters, in fact (Sartre's huge, unfinished, apparently abandoned book on Flaubert, remember, is whimsically titled *L'idiot de la famille*); but once he has turned that corner it was as if he had been born clutching a pen. At age nine, in the first of the letters published here, which may also have been the first he wrote that someone thought worth keeping, he is already burdened with an artist's self-consciousness, unnaturally concerned with matters of style, not in the crude sense of flourish and "refinement" but in some serious literary sense. Early, the very context is literary, in a once-familiar, now (I suppose) extinct way: as if he had leapt from illiteracy into literature in a single bound, he is writing "plays" intended for performance by himself, his siblings, their friends before an audience of family, relatives, neighbors—in an age when gifted children, encouraged by parents, governesses, teachers and other benevolent presences, did such things—pay heed, Mothers of America. "Friend," he writes grandly to a boy his senior by a year, himself all of ten, like some Norman senator and member of the Academy, "I'll send you some of my political and constitutional liberal speeches. . . . I'll also send you some of my comedies. If you'd like us to work together at writing, I'll write comedies and you can write your dreams, and since there's a lady who comes to see papa and always says stupid things I'll write them too." Abruptly he breaks off in a spasm of self-criticism: "I'm not writing this letter well" and accounts for his failure by adding "because I'm expecting a box of sweets" from relatives.

At the beginning of his career Flaubert seems almost to foreshadow his end in the *Dictionary of Received Ideas* and one unfinished *Bouvard et Pecuchet*, where at the time of his death in 1880 he was trying to catalogue all the "stupid things" said, thought and committed in the nineteenth century—indeed the stupidities of the species before he him-

The Letters of Gustave Flaubert 1830-1857 Selected, edited & translated by Francis Steegmuller. Belknap/Harvard. $12.50, 250 pp.

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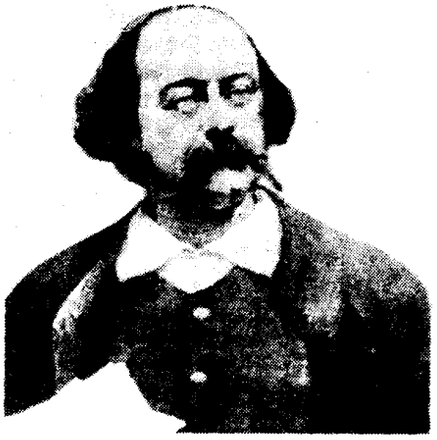
self drowned in them. Allow the boy who was father to the man to continue in his own voice. At age 14, after informing his friend that he is "working like a demon, getting up at half-past-three in the morning," he writes: "I see with indignation that theater censorship is going to be reintroduced and the freedom of the press abolished; yes, this law will be passed, for the representatives of the people are nothing but a filthy lot of sold-out wretches, they see only their own interests, their natural bent is toward baseness, their honor is a stupid pride, their soul a lump of mud; but some day, a day will come before long, the people will unleash a third revolution; kings' heads will roll, there will be rivers of blood. At present they are depriving the man of letters of his conscience, his artist's conscience. Yes, our century is rich in bloody peripeties. Adieu, au revoir, and let us continue to devote ourselves to what is greater than peoples, crowns and kings: to the good of Art, who is ever-present, wearing his diadem, his divine frenzy merely in abeyance."

A year or so later the son of Dr. Flaubert is confidently telling his friend that the "most beautiful woman is scarcely beautiful on the table of the dissecting-room, with her bowels draped over her nose, one leg minus its skin, and half a burnt-out cigar on her foot. Oh no it's a sad thing, criticism, study, plumbing the depths of knowledge to find only vanity, analyzing the human heart to find only egoism, and understanding the world only to find in it nothing but misery." And much more: the surviving letters from those years throb with the quivering intensities of Romantic adolescence. But having made all manner of allowance for the characteristic rhetoric of his age and Age, his posturing and bombast and so on, one nevertheless must acknowledge that permanent features of the inner landscape are fixed in place along with attitudes that will undergo refinement and elaboration but not essential change. The deep abiding nausea with life, the profound devotion



to Art which transcends and indeed reproaches the trivial aestheticism of his own and a later generation—is, as it develops in the great letters of the 1850s, principally those to Louise Colet, recognizably modern and more than that constitutive of central attitudes of literary modernism, just as the Bovary letters are among its central documents.

But first, for better or worse, that turning-point in his life, the grand tour of the real, imagined, fantasied Orient, that region of the mind. Steegmuller—to whom we're all so greatly indebted for his masterly translation of *Madame Bovary*, and whose translations of the letters are beyond praise—organizes the letters chronologically and "selects" them thematically so that, with the support of wonderfully illuminating notes and running commentary, they compose in themselves a kind of biography in small scale, all of it building with seeming inevitability toward the Bovary years and the aftermath of publication, prosecution (on grounds of outraging religion and public morals) and vindication. The letters conclude with the brief, moving exchange with Baudelaire (himself suffering similar prosecution for *Les Fleurs du Mal*), the two meeting in recognition each of the other, each the author of a supreme masterpiece after which nothing would ever be the same, not merely for a generation or movement but for a culture, which is as close as we need to come to defining a classic.

Thus the letters progress from boyhood and adolescence, to the years of suffering the hated study of law at his father's insistence, and his escape from it into sickness, slow convalescence and so to speak selective retreat from the world, to the devastating loss in quick succession of his father and sister and dearest friend and more than friend, Alfred Le Poittevin, who had betrayed him after a fashion by marrying in the usual way and producing a child by conventional means—the loss he was always to consider the most annihilating of his life. The first series of letters to Louise Colet, beginning with their first meeting in 1846 and ending with what was intended as a final parting in 1848, is of considerable human and literary interest as a spawning ground for Flaubert's developing ideas about art, the artist's life, his own powerfully sensed destiny—and his deep ambivalence toward Louise in particular and the life of the flesh in general. If she insists that he protest his love, and she does insist, all the time, he is almost always glad enough to oblige the lady: he knows the rules of the rite and, besides, it provides him with opportunities for some fine, resounding sentences in the conventional mode as leavening for the never ending bookishness that drove her to frenzies of rage and jealousy. Could the youth (he was ten years her junior) really prefer art to her arms? He really could; nor would he dissemble. A "thousand warm caresses" he is glad to bestow upon demand, along with a thousand kisses here, there, everywhere; but he wants her to know that nothing gives him pleasure as rich, deep and abiding as those provided inexhaustibly by the works of the illustrious dead, and that the "three finest things God ever made are the sea, *Hamlet*, and Mozart's *Don Giovanni*."

At the time of the final break, at the end of the second series of letters, in a letter, one of several which Steegmuller regrettably decided to exclude, Flaubert is past all dissembling. "I am like the tiger," he furiously tells her, "who has bristles of hair at the tip of his glans, which lacerate the female." And again—he is thirty-four at the time and still working on Bovary: "I confess I no longer have any sexual urge, thank God." And finally, with even more lacerating cruelty: "I have always tried (but I think I have failed) to turn you into a sublime hermaphrodite. I want you to be a man down to the navel; below that,

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you get in my way, you disturb me—your female element ruins everything." Flaubert took a fierce pleasure in telling her (and his male friends, for that matter) of his decided preference always for whores and brothels, the seamier the better; and this is the Flaubert who not long before, in the interval between the first series of letters to Louise and beginning work on Bovary (and resuming the correspondence with Louise), made his progress through the Orient, senses reeling, a triumphal tour, it often seems, of picturesque ruins, crumbling antiquities and exotic, reeking, verminous whorehouses, his inhibitions dissolved by distance from home and mother. It is a rampant quest for polymorphous sensation of every variety along a sexual spectrum from boy to beast, in an alien atmosphere and foreign climes, imperial Europe striding the "backward" colonies mired in the brackish backwaters of history: all the elements of sexual imperialism. Invincible power confronting absolute powerlessness; a sovereign priapism on the one side, total availability on the other.

Flaubert, in his letters home, principally to LePoittevin's successor as his dearest male friend, whom he will soon designate official "midwife" to the novel about to be conceived and in agony brought to fruition—to Louis Bouilhet he counts (actually, literally counts) the precise number of orgasms scored (mot juste, I think, though it is mine not his) upon or against whatever bodies wherever located, a form of body count long before the phrase was invented for another perverse colonial war. And with the same sort of crazy pride—as if in some magnificent, unprecedented achievement—brandishing the number of chancres incurred during his royal progress. (Jules de Goncourt, Maupassant, Baudelaire, an untold number of others, were destined to die horribly of paresis—it is an immense relief to have him back at his desk in Croisset, bloated with the gorgeous pyrotechnic imagery that would go into *Salammbô* and other later work; and writing Louise those lines which never cease to move us: "Last night I began my novel. Now I foresee difficulties of style, and they terrify me. It is no small thing to be simple.") It is also to Louis Bouilhet that he will cry out of the making of a work of art: "We're good at sucking, we play a lot of tongue games, we pet for hours: but—the real thing! To ejaculate, beget the child!"

When, not long after, now launched upon the novel, he writes ". . . there are no noble subjects or ignoble subjects; from the standpoint of pure Art one might almost establish the axiom that there is no such thing as subject—style in itself being an absolute manner of seeing things . . ." we know we are listening to something new under the sun, and are hearing it still.

Books: GESTURES OF SOLIDARITY

THE SECCND COMING
Walker Percy
Farrar, Straus, Giroux, $12.95, 360 pp.

Gerard Reedy

THOUGH Walker Percy has always been a critic of how twentieth-century Americans live, and though *The Second Coming*, his fifth novel, continues this critique, this new work attempts in much greater detail than before to accentuate the positive: to explore, with great imaginative joy, states in which human beings may live together with authenticity. *The Second Coming* especially harkens back to and develops those scenes in Percy's previous work where authentic, human community occurs: a few conversations between Binx Bolling and Kate Cutrer in *The Moviegoer* (1961); the fleeting gesture of solidarity between Will Barrett and Sutter Vaught at the end of *The Last Gentleman* (1966); the epilogue to *Love in the Ruins* (1971), in which Tom More enjoys a family Christmas; and the mad-house visions of a peaceful life in the Shenandoah Valley of Lance Lamar in *Lancelot* (1977). *The Second Coming* continues the troubled life of Will Barrett; it explores and defines a "tertium quid," as Will calls it, between the extremes of suicide and mindless living which American society habitually offers in Percy's novels.

Will Barrett is now in his mid-fifties, a retired widower living in North Carolina, very wealthy, and still falling into the psychic gaps which had plagued his early years. He meets Allison Hunnicutt Huger, the daughter of his old girlfriend, Kitty Vaught. Allie has just escaped from the mental home in which her parents have placed her. Will and Allie found their relationship on simplicity. Because of Allie's mental illness and the shock treatments forced upon her, she must relearn basic language skills; Will alone appreciates that in her careful naming of things she makes more sense than the rest of the world. They build up a language together; they court each other and make love. To create a shelter Allie and the artisans Will later recruits use only the simplest tools and materials. Will and Allie are building up human society over again, from scratch. In the eyes of the world, represented by Allie's mother, this is all shocking. It would appear from the end of the novel, though much is left unresolved, that Will, Allie, and the community they found will survive.

Percy's heroes invariably have to come to terms with the memory of their fathers; generally social misfits, like their sons, these fathers are often depressed individuals and sometimes suicidal. In *The Second Coming*, Will manages to remember what was hidden from us in *The Last Gentleman:* that his father attempted to kill his twelve-year-old son and himself several years before a second attempt on his own life was successful. Will often speaks with his dead father in this novel; in these imaginary conversations, his father tempts him, almost successfully, to suicide. Percy's use of

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psychiatric models of behavior is always interesting. Will's acts of remembering recall the structure of psychoanalysis; it is only when he recovers the memory of what his father had tried to do that he is free to act. Yet Percy's principals must always pass beyond the various clinical helps offered to them — in this novel, therapy, shock treatments, and pills — for living in the future. This is so even when the hero himself, as in *Love in the Ruins*, insists on a fully scientific, empirical view of the psyche. In Percy, salvation only occurs with the advent of the other, the right person, the friend or lover, whose subjectivity is eternally and irreducibly hostile to empirical analysis. However clinically ill the subjects who relate to one another may be, intersubjectivity is the purpose of their existence. An unabashed, tendentious romantic, Percy also has the great ability to construct scenes, especially in this novel, where intersubjectivity becomes so real it hurts.

From the notebooks of Sutter Vaught in *The Last Gentleman* on into the present work, Walker Percy has been reluctant to understand his action and characters in anything less than a fully theological background. Will and Allie recapitulate, in their choice of words and tools, the history of culture; in his religious development, Will progresses from the mentality of a cranky Old Testament prophet, who rejects the world, to a hesitant awareness, given to him only on the last page of the novel, of God's incarnational presence in the world. Will initially seeks his "tertium quid" by retreating to a cave to await a "sign" from God; if God exists, he will appear to save him from death by starvation. This demand for empirical proof parallels, on the religious level, the scientific reductionism that recurs in the novels and that is a major theme of Percy's collected essays, *The Message in the Bottle* (1975). A toothache eventually drives Will from the cave and into Allie's arms. God gives his "sign" in and through the comedy of the human body; he will not give it in response to abstract demands placed upon him — a human strategy called "angelism" in *Love in the Ruins* — and Will, in spite of himself, is saved. "Is she a gift and therefore a sign of a giver?," Will asks himself, about Allie, at the end. "Could it be that the Lord is here, masquerading himself behind this simple silly holy face?" Read as a whole, the five novels present their own sign of contradiction; the reader who does not believe in the "simple silly holy" body — "holy" because God has been there — must be puzzled indeed by the way Percy rescues a few characters from the nonsense going on around them.

The reader of *The Second Coming* who expects rowdy social criticism will not be disappointed. Percy's satirical targets here include: old-age homes, overeating, makers of pornographic films, born-again Christians, belief in reincarnation, a priest in a jump suit who feels "uneasy" talking about religion, ecumenism, astrology, and California, where "everyone believed everything," and which has apparently replaced Ohio as the object of Percy's special disfavor. No redemption is offered to these many social and religious realities, as it is to Will and Allie. At the end of *The Moviegoer*, Binx Bolling has an inkling that God just might have something to do with organized religion; no such intuition bothers Will Barrett here. Percy cannot do everything in every novel; *The Second Coming* is complex enough as it stands and it is right for the author tacitly to let his novels comment on one another. Sometimes Will's thoughts make for difficult reading; for most of us, it is the interspersed social satire, thematically integrated or not, which relieves the strain of the ongoing personal drama.

Much has already been written about the relative merits of *The Second Coming* in the Percy canon. For me, the novel lacks the purity and simplicity of *The Moviegoer* and the richly theological development of *Love in the Ruins*. Some of the structural difficulties of *The Last Gentleman* recur: Will's trip down and across the country there and his car and bus trip to Atlanta here — however much they symbolize the lot of *homo viator* — interfere with the forward progress of the book. Percy feels compelled at times to comment on current events like integration and Southern real estate dealing, as in these travel narratives, that do not fire his imagination. On the other hand, Percy integrates his philosophical interest in language more successfully here than he has been able to do before; Allie's re-creation of the world through language is stunning in conception and execution. Certain residual ambiguities in the characters of Will and Kitty and Sutter Vaught are nicely cleared up; also, we get a humane explanation at last why so many Percy heroes prefer war to peace ("thinking of peace during war is better than peace"). Like all of Percy's novels, *The Second Coming* is a challenging work; like other Percy heroes, Will is slightly mad, and, once again, it is occasionally difficult to see where the author's irony begins and ends. The major change *The Second Coming* rings on the previous novels lies in its greater exploration of the peaceful, romantic images that have always been present in Percy's work and are here amplified to challenge, if not drown out, the discord of twentieth-century America.

Carolingian utopia

THE PLAN OF ST. GALL

Walter Horn and Ernest Born

Univ. of California, $325, 3 Vols.

Dennis Leder

DEBATE once engaged late medieval theologians, it is said, as to how many angels could dance on the head of a pin. Today the question might be posed in terms of computer technology and the storage of facts in tiny silicon chips. But regardless of the form it takes, the issue of compression seems to exert on us a special fascination. This may be why an ancient parchment which miraculously survived nearly 700 years of oblivion was finally resurrected in the fifteenth century, and continues to generate great interest half a millennium later. On that single sheet is contained a condensed "image of the whole of Carolingian life."

What emerged in 1461 from the library

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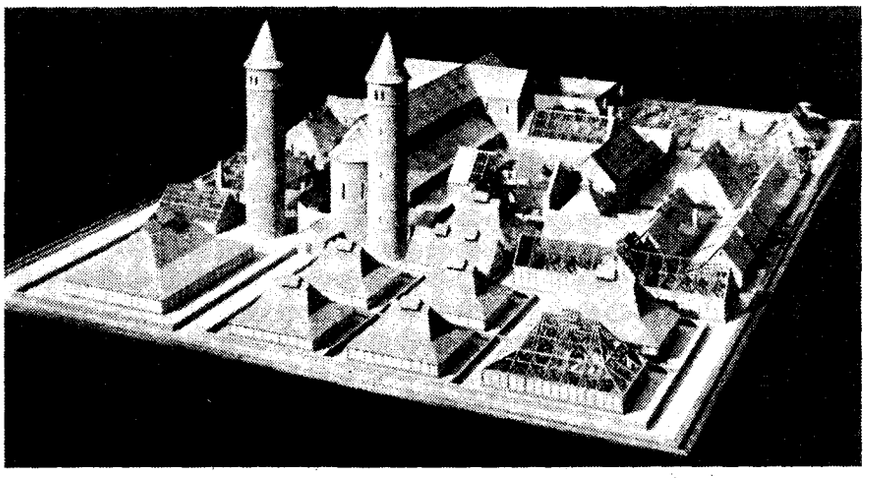
shelves of the monastery of St. Gall in Switzerland was a large sheet of sewn vellum folded to approximate the dimensions of a book. On one side of the sheet a twelfth century monk had inscribed a life of Saint Martin of Tours. The architectural plan on the parchment's reverse side was thought to relate to Saint Martin's monastery. It wasn't until the early seventeenth century that the written notations on the plan side of the sheet were correctly linked to Abbot Gozbert, spiritual leader of St. Gall from 816 to 836. Thereupon, history was reacquainted with one of its most remarkable feats of compression, a ninth century model for the ideal monastic community.



Dating back to between 820 and 830 A.D. and the scriptorium of the island-abbey of Reichenau, the plan of St. Gall was drawn up to be the prototypical Benedictine monastery. It was a product of its time, when cultural unity was the highest priority, and when its availability in a unified language (Latin), religion (Christianity), and authority (pope and emperor) allowed the notion of a utopian society to be within human grasp.

What Charlemagne envisioned shortly after his coronation in 800 A.D. was a Holy Roman Empire known for its cohesive political, administrative, economic and spiritual life. To attain this the emperor knew that a unity of the church was indispensable for the unity of the kingdom; uniform standards of conduct for secular and monastic clergy had yet to be established. Monasticism, fashioned by Irish monks and built on earlier prototypes from Egypt and Syria, was characterized by individual self-discipline or at best loosely grouped communities; architecture for the holy reflected a separatist spirituality. The highly organized community plan of Saint Benedict's Rule, therefore, was what Charlemagne promulgated to consolidate Western monasticism. He did this through two synods held at the royal palace of Aachen in 816 and 817, which respectively provided directives for canons and canonesses and rules controlling monastic life.

Just as the atmosphere which fostered compression in Charlemagne's time was one of unity and logic, so the compression to which we are subjected today in a complex and changing world is an unending flow of facts, which we learn to store rather than digest. Where meaning emerges at all it is in the aftermath of colliding opposites. Politics, economy, even spirituality, are laced with anxiety. We seem as far from Utopia as we are from the ninth century and its plan of St. Gall.

What then is the fascination with this diagrammatic plan? Surely nostalgia could not be enough to claim the ongoing attention of artists, and architects, city-planners, and students of religion. Rather, there seems to be something quite contemporary about Abbot Gozbert's plan, not the least being its ingenious draftsmanship (stressing essentials while leaving non-essentials to individual interpretation.) Here, in fact, is a viable community plan arranged so that 110 monks could go about their spiritual duties in close proximity but unimpeded by 150 lay workers. Here was the storeroom for Western civilization, where books could be written, the young schooled, the sick cared for, the underprivileged ministered to. Even the emperor himself with a lavish retinue could be lodged. The plan gives us a scaled-down density which a modern city-dweller would understand. But the amazing thing is that the scale is human (one might even say divine: Many "Sacred numbers" appear in the proportions of major building sites and in the dimensions of individual buildings.) Contemporary also is the conservation implied in the plan. Storage and accommodations served specific needs, avoided excess and were never arbitrary; deceased monks, for example, shared space with the monastery orchard. As their remains fostered the growth of the fruit trees, together they provided a rich visual symbol of the promise of new life.

The integrity between scale and purpose in the plan is as timely an architectural concept as the modernists' "form follows function." Though some post-modernist architects might take the stance that any design goes, such an attitude seems to be the result of losing grip on careful planning, and capitulating to those inevitable opposites which beset us in other spheres. But the plan of St. Gall offers a model of order and clarity, with care for the most mundane issues of life as well as the most exalted. And it does so in a fashion that helps us think more clearly: of a need for collaboration in tasks and talents as opposed to an isolating individualism; of a need for evenly distributed and humanly scaled space; of a need for conservation and simplicity; of

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FATHER DENNIS LEDER, S.J., *worked for a year and a half at an experimental art center and participated in an independent study program at the Whitney Museum.*

JOHN DRUSKA *is a director of the St. Francis College Academic Opportunity Center in Fort Wayne.*

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a need for the sacred in our secular lives.

In the hands of art historian Walter Horn, and architect Ernest Born, this ninth century plan has been given exhaustive examination, and loving treatment which makes their resulting three-volume collaborative effort a treasure in book publishing, as the plan itself is a national treasure of Switzerland.

Among the amazing details of this set of books, which has been two decades in the making, is its visual presence. When paging through the volumes one gets the impression of observing a lost era in book production. All is done with impeccable care, from multicolored end papers, to little pages of great nobility; 1,000 illustrations appear in some form of color, or color-augmented line. Whether diagram, photograph, or architectural elevation, the graphics are of an extraordinary precision and beauty, and they charge the text on almost every page.

The fact that a sheet of vellum 30½" x 44" could generate three volumes of factual information is proof indeed of the plan's compression. Volume one opens with a lineage of the place of St. Gall from its supposed architect, Bishop Hatio of Basel, to Abbot Gozbert, who presumably ordered it for some extensive renovation for his monastery—the plan itself was never fully realized. Authors Horn and Born trace the plan to early Roman prototypes (camps, cities, and medieval forts). Their investigations are so precise that a thorough reconstruction of the monastery could accurately be achieved, allowing even for such necessities as heating, lighting, ventilation, baking and cooking. The second half of the first volume is given over to a fascinating study of the monastery church, the cloisters, and the Abbot's house, ending with a breakdown of the political organization of a typical Benedictine monastery.

Volume two looks at the guest and service buildings of this theoretical plan from the perspective of the earliest known examples of such buildings in transalpine Europe. The plan's effect on later monastic planning is the topic of the concluding part of this volume.

Volume three is given over to appendices. Noteworthy is Walter Horn's precise and informative catalogue of 340 explanatory titles written in brown ink on the plan itself. The hands of two scribes are seen in the annotations; working collaboratively these scribes pointed out the purpose of each building in a brief verse, while employing an abbreviated prose to show equipment and furnishings, and the function of individual rooms.

A second appendix is a translation of the Customs of Corbie. These directives were composed by Abbot Adalhard (754-826), blood cousin of Charlemagne, for the smooth management of his monastery's economy. They achieve in words what the plan of St. Gall achieves in visual form, and therefore make a fitting supplement to a study of the Carolingian monastic system. Among the ample glossary and bibliography at the conclusion of the volume is a chronological table from 55 B.C. to 900 A.D.; this is a feat of compression in its own right, covering such topics as important events, significant structures and technology, and printed matter (including art and manuscripts) over nearly 1,000 years.

The Plan of St. Gall may be a reminder that capsulizing information is not an achievement reserved to computer technology. More importantly, though, it is a model (admittedly on a simpler scale) for human environments and communal cooperation. Thanks to Walter Horn and Ernest Born we have a permanent reminder of that fact in three volumes which, like their subject, are treasures of timeliness, compression, and beauty.

Pearls on a string

SMILE PLEASE
AN UNFINISHED AUTOBIOGRAPHY
Jean Rhys
Harper & Row, $10.95, 151 pp.

Robert Phillips

"THE GREATEST living English novelist," A. Alvarez called Jean Rhys when her books were republished in the 1960s, after a three-decade lapse into obscurity. Alvarez is too generous; Rhys's five novels are too narrow in range for greatness. Though her name changes from book to book, the female protagonist in each is the same, Jean Rhys at different stages of development (or disintegration). And the men in her novels are rarely developed. They remain foils for her desperate woman, whose sensitive and artistic nature renders her unable to contend in the aggressive male world.

But if Jean Rhys was not the greatest living English novelist (she died in 1979), she was a fine one. She possessed an instinctive feeling for form, and—like Colette—her insight into the feminine sensibility seems total. Her plots championing the underdog were subtle yet somehow inevitable. Above all, her language was careful, a delight to read. Her novels and three story collections should not date; those written in the late '20s and early '30s are still as disturbing today, and their language is in no way quaint.

Now we have Rhys's unfinished autobiography. Only 148 pages long, even if completed it would not have been conventional. In an editor's foreword, Diane Athill discusses Rhys's difficulties in writing this book (and understates them considerably, when compared with David Plante's own harrowing account of Rhys's last years, published in the Fall 1979 issue of *The Paris Review*). Aside from alcoholism, which Ms. Athill does not mention, and heart attacks and arthritis, which Athill does, Rhys also was battling her own feelings of inadequacy—believing that so much of her life already had been mined for fiction, her material was used-up. She also felt that autobiography, unlike fiction, must be literally true in every detail, including conversations. At her advanced age (she began the book at eighty-six), she distrusted her memory. Yet she wanted to get the facts down before she was, as the Irish say, "gathered."

The solution was to construct an autobiography around a series of vital occasions which had involved her and present

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them chronologically. *Smile Please* is, then, a series of vignettes—pearls on a string of her life. It was a method suited to her dramatic sense. The first section, roughly half the volume, concerns her childhood in Dominica where she felt "alone except for books." The pearls she threads concern parents, cooks, songs, games, dolls, dresses, and terrors of an impressionable young girl sent to a convent day school. (She had heard many horror stories about the nuns; most of the girls at the convent were colored.) This section reinforces impressions of Rhys's own youth and West Indian roots as presented fictionally in Anna Morgan's memories in *Voyage in the Dark* (1934) and in Antoinette Cosway's in *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966). In this entire first section the writing is of the highest distinction.

Rhys only lived to complete that section—76 pages in all. The rest is first drafts and notes toward first drafts concerning her removal to London, her schooling and jobs there, her first love affair, first marriage, the death of a son, and the impulse to become a writer. Some material seems finished; much else—the diary entries especially—are sketchy in the extreme. Nothing is written about Rhys's second and third marriages, or her living daughter. As a whole the book is an incomplete portrait of the subject behind some of the most subjective fiction of our time. Anyone interested in Rhys's fiction will want to read it. But they will wish there were more.

A note on the editing: It is to Ms. Athill's credit she decided to include the piece, "My Day," which Jean Rhys did not originally conceive as part of the book. Originally published in *Vogue*, it gives us a vivid look at Rhys as an old woman. Athill might also have included the little memoir, "Invitation to the Dance," published in a 1975 chapbook. And an appendix comprised of the last uncollected short stories—"Close Season for the Old?" from *The Times* (London); "The Lotus" and "Temps Perdu" from *Art and Literature* (No. 11 & 12)—would have added some substance and polish to what presumably is the last book by this gifted prose stylist.

Vienna waltzes

FIN-DE-SIECLE VIENNA:
Politics and Culture
Carl E. Schorske
Knopf, $15.95, 378 pp.

A NERVOUS SPLENDOR:
Vienna 1888/1889
Frederic Morton
Atlantic-Little Brown, $14.95, 340 pp.

THE VIENNA I KNEW:
Memories of a European Childhood
Joseph Wechsberg
Doubleday, $10.95, 263 pp.

Stephen Toulmin

THESE DAYS, Americans find themselves fascinated by the final years of Habsburg Vienna—what Karl Kraus ironically referred to as "the last days of mankind." The two Gustavs now hold dominating positions in their respective branches of our "high" culture, Klimt with his glittering metallic portraits, Mahler with his nostalgic song cycles and challenging symphonies; although, as little as 20 years ago, neither of them was held in very general regard. Despite current skepticism among professional psychiatrists, Freud's ideas about neurosis and narcissism continue to rule the popular psychotherapeutic culture. Metternichian themes and Josefian policies play an increasing part in our national and international politics. Our furniture and interior decoration are once again picking up echoes of the *Wiener Werkstätte*. And, above all, publishers are finding Vienna from 1860 on a fruitful field for near-best sellers.

What is it about the society and culture of that time and place to which we are so responsive? Is it the spectacle of a multiracial superpower caught in the posture of retreat? Or is it a recognition of Vienna 1880-1914 as the birthplace of our own mid-20th century phase in Western culture? Is it the social problems that we share with the Viennese liberals of a hundred years ago: the problems of the politically excluded minorities (blacks

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and Hispanics for us, Slovenes, Ruthenians and the rest for them), or the inflexibilities built into an institutional framework established more than 200 years before? Or is it our natural sympathy for those individual thinkers, writers and artists who had to grow up into communities that were themselves exposed to continual stress, and our admiration for all that they achieved in the face of the resulting psychosocial strains—even a sneaking hope that, with a little Grace and some good luck, we may yet be as productive ourselves?

It is in hope of finding answers to questions like these that one turns to each new batch of "Vienna books." Carl Schorske's book, *Fin-de-Siecle Vienna*, was long awaited. It reprints his four earlier essays on the period, dating from 1961 to 1973, and adds three further, hitherto unpublished essays. So, along with Schorske's earlier treatments of Arthur Schnitzler, Adalbert Stifter, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Sigmund Freud, Theodore Herzl, Karl Lueger and the others, we now have further studies of Klimt, Kokoschka and Schoenberg, together with a fascinating account of the "urban renewal" projects which, from 1860 on, created the circling *Ringstrasse* that still imposes its architectural unity on Central Vienna today.

The perception and significant detail with which Schorske builds up his portraits of individual painters and politicians, writers and architects, are as fine and impressive in the new essays as in their predecessors. The new essay on Gustav Klimt is particularly good. Schorske's feeling for the many different kinds of factors lying behind the development of Klimt's style, subjects and iconography is extraordinary. With so much that is quite excellent to be found in this book, it may seem unfair if, nonetheless, I confess to a sense of disappointment. Through his lectures at Princeton and his published articles, Schorske established himself long since as the *doyen* of scholars in this field, and all others writing in the same area have worked in his shadow. As a result, his colleagues have perhaps been tempted to discount the merits of this book in advance. We had assumed that the existing essays were merely chips, or sketches of a much vaster work; and we had come to expect from Schorske a titanic, comprehensive politico-psychological analysis of Habsburg culture and society. Now the previous essays are simply reprinted here, in all their perfection, along with their new fellows; and it turns out that, all along, the 50-page essay or vignette has been Schorske's natural medium. It is as though we had been expecting Beethoven's *Choral Symphony*, only to be given one more beautiful song cycle!

Though it would be wrong to underestimate Schorske's present book, it is not unreasonable for us to hope for something more from him. For there are a great many persons and topics about which he has certainly thought deeply, yet never touches on in this collection, and we are entitled to wonder what he would say about them. When Allan Janik and I published our book on Wittgenstein and Vienna in 1972, it was hard to write up our own research without an uneasy fear of plagiarizing: and, indeed, Herbert Marcuse greeted me at the time with the words, "I see you have written Carl Schorske's book!" Yet, in the event, I only wish that Marcuse's comment had proved apt. For the list of absentees from Schorske's pages is at least as distinguished as the list of those present. He alludes to Ernst Mach only as having

Responsible Dissent

Society needs rebels. Historians may prefer to focus on broad forces of social and political change, but it is the image of the rebel pitted against established power that dramatizes the moral dimension of human history: the Berrigan brothers assaulting the Pentagon, Martin Luther King, Jr., challenging Bull Connor's Birmingham, Thomas More standing firm against Henry VIII, Alexander Solzhenitsyn defying the Kremlin, Dietrich Bonhoeffer opposing Hitler. Rebels assert basic values against the destructive power of authority. . . .

The church needs her rebels. But rebels also need the church. Her living Christian tradition, nourished by many intellectual currents, often provides the vision underlying their commitment. Church authorities are the friction points which force dissenters toward greater intellectual clarity and intensity. Catholicism provides a structure to harness creative energies and a living community to test and assimilate (however painfully) new ideas.

The church's constraints are intolerable for many. Yet limits are vital to the creative process. Moreover, responsible dissenters know that truth is complex and that all people, including their adversaries, hold mixtures of truth and error. The church's medieval ban against interest was obsolete in a world of emergent capitalism. But centuries of exploitative capitalism have deepened our appreciation for the premise on which the ban rested: that man's penchant for profit must be curbed for the common good. . . .

——Edward Cuddy, "The Rebel Function is Catholicism," *Commonweal*, Sept. 14, 1979.

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been a contemporary of Schoenberg; he gives us nothing of Robert Musil beyond a single quotation; he nowhere discusses Wittgenstein, Weininger, or any other serious writers on philosophy; and his picture of the *intellectual* life of late Habsburg Vienna—as contrasted with its cultural, artistic and psychological life—remains surprisingly thin and sketchy. Again and again, his essays begin by discussing (say) the academic politics surrounding Klimt's frescoes for the University, only to end in the depths of Klimt's own psyche. I carried away from these essays the puzzling impression that, perhaps, Schorske sincerely regards all the achievements of the intellect as significant only to the extent that they are sublimations of a deeper creative/sexual libido; so that the psychologically perceptive *Kulturhistoriker* can afford to disregard, not merely philosophy, but the natural sciences also.

Anyone who is primarily interested in social issues and stresses, and regards the inner psychic conflicts of individuals as being, at least in part, the internalized forms of external conflicts, will therefore have to look beyond Schorske for enlightenment. Here, for instance, one can recommend two books written by Vienna-born authors who have spent large parts of their lives in the United States. Frederic Morton wrote a previous best-seller on *The Rothschilds:* his present picture of Vienna at the time of Crown Prince Rudolph's spectacular suicide at Mayerling is as compulsive and well-written as the earlier book. Although it does not pretend to be a product of serious primary research, it is nevertheless well documented and generally reliable. Joseph Wechsberg grew up in a provincial town in Moravia, and has returned to Vienna in his retirement. Readers of *The New Yorker* will already be familiar with his charm and style; and the present series of autobiographical essays is well up to his usual standard. True, a lot of it is not about Vienna at all, but about the Wechsberg family, and their misadventures in what is now Czechoslovakia; yet the book is a joy to read. All told, the fashion for late Habsburg Vienna is well served by all three books.

'Catholic Peace Conspiracy' beginnings

ANOTHER PART OF THE WAR
THE CAMP SIMON STORY

Gordon C. Zahn

Univ. of Massachusetts, $14., 273 pp.

Tom Cornell

THIS WORTHY contribution to the sociology of peace brings Gordon Zahn to the beginning of his own involvement in the cause, as a conscientious objector assigned to the Civilian Public Service (CPS) camp near Warner, N.H. Readers of *German Catholics and Hitler's Wars* and *In Solitary Witness* (once again available through The Liturgical Press), will be grateful for this addition to Zahn's works.

The experiences of some seventy-five conscientious objectors, and their later recollections and reflections upon them, at the ill-fated Camp Simon between October, 1942 and March 1943, would not on the surface seem to be of much consequence. But Camp Simon, so named by the c.o.'s assigned there after the man of Cyrene who helped Jesus carry his cross, was the only CPS camp operated under Roman Catholic auspices, primarily for Catholic c.o.'s, and as such it was the first corporate expression of pacifism in American Catholicism. Moreover, in that experience can be found at least some roots or antecedents of what came to be called (with some media "hype") the "Great Catholic Peace Conspiracy" of the 1960s.

Zahn participated in the Camp Simon experiment during its whole six-month span, but he is too practiced a scholar to allow his personal experiences and biases to warp his presentation; they rather give it life, color and irony. The story of Camp Simon is not a happy one. It was forced to close after half a year. Its problems were rooted in the nature of the CPS program, in the immaturity and pettiness of the campers, in the disparity of rationales for the position they held in common, and in the lack of moral and financial support from the larger Catholic community. The fact that there was no identifiably useful purpose to most of the work projects of CPS and the remoteness of the camps made it unavoidably clear to most participants that they were not being given an opportunity to witness to their beliefs and to serve the common good in an exemplary and nonviolent manner. They were put out of the way. The Warner campers were to clear 1938 hurricane damage from a wilderness, for no pay. The lack of mutuality and common understanding among the Catholic c.o.'s undermined potential camp unity of purpose. Some were convinced that World War II was unjust according to the scholastic just war theory, others that the U.S. had no business saving the British Empire. Some saw alliance with the Soviet Union as diabolical. Some were of a more evangelical pacifist bent. There were non-Catholics, ex-Catholics, and not very fervent Catholics, as well as the "chapel group." Those connected with the Catholic Worker movement were most influential in the running of the camp. They also seemed to suffer less from the physical privations of camp life, inured as they were from service in the C.W. houses of hospitality in urban skidrows.

Camp Simon was administered by the Association of Catholic Conscientious Objectors, a benign front for the Catholic Worker movement. Dorothy Day, cofounder and still leader of the movement, never really approved of CPS or its camps. She always contended that the best response to the Selective Service System was complete non-cooperation. Nevertheless she gave the camp what support she could, through visits and through the *Catholic Worker* monthly paper, though with scant response from the readership. There was no financial support whatever from the bishops. It was common opinion that c.o.'s were material if not formal heretics, and that the Catholic Worker movement was at the (lunatic) fringe of the church. At last all the C.W. men left the program, many for military service. (One of them told

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me years later that he found it easier to be a Christian in the army than in CPS camp.)

Zahn seems to appreciate Dorothy Day's attitude more today, but he is sympathetic toward the elders of the historic peace churches who fought for the establishment of the CPS and later administered it. Whatever their mistakes and however seriously compromised they became, their intentions were praiseworthy. They remembered vividly the barbaric treatment of c.o.'s during World War I, when there was no opportunity to declare conscientious objection until after military induction, so that c.o.'s were subject to military justice. Some peace agencies, such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation, pulled out of the program before the war's end.

Now that plans for resuming military conscription are under way in Washington, with the registration of nineteen- and twenty-year-olds, it is important to take a fresh look at the history of protection of conscience in the U.S. Clearly the CPS was a fraud and an injustice, thus a very bad precedent. Any attempts to refurbish such a program should be headed off as swiftly as possible.

The links between the World War II experience of CPS and the "Great Catholic Peace Conspiracy" of the '60s are not made clear in this book. The most obvious is the Catholic Worker movement, with its demonstrations against Civil Defense in the 1950s and against the Vietnam war beginning in 1963. The Catholic Peace Fellowship was organized through the C.W. in 1964. Thomas Merton's writings on peace and those of the Berrigan brothers were first published in the *Catholic Worker*. Many of the early draft card burners were C.W. men. Another link is Zahn himself. His profuse writings and lectures have stimulated the growth of the Catholic pacifist movement, grounded it in a clear perception of contemporary reality, and kept it in continuity with Catholic orthodoxy and social teaching. As an activist Zahn has been a strong voice in the movement's councils. He is a founder of both the Catholic Peace Fellowship and Pax Christi, USA.

Those who are interested in a scholarly and extraordinarily well written and lively account of a minuscule but pregnant element of World War II history will find it invaluable.

A disheartening reminder

1929

Warren Sloat

Macmillan, $14.95, 370 pp.

John Druska

THIS JOURNALIST'S book draws largely on the periodicals of the time to recreate events of a year in which "the various facets of electronic technology were converging . . . and the age of electronics was emerging." *1929* uses Henry Ford's elaborate staging of "Light's Golden Jubilee"—that iconoclastic mass-man's tribute to Thomas Edison—as its set-piece, around which its cast of businessmen and promoters perform again their quasi-alchemic, but pragmatically crafty assumption of roles as earnest modern technocrats.

For those readers stunned by today's conglomerate growth, appalled at the ballyhooed astro-gruel with which media happenings have carpeted the country, and disillusioned by the industrialized rhetoric of service, through which a certain worm always screws to the tune of profit, Warren Sloat's anecdotal history may serve as a disheartening reminder that most of our power elite's self-serving sleight of hand, our networks' cultural homogenization, our establishments' doublespeak, are simply new twists of old tricks.

The dynamo that hums familar double-standards of America's puritanically-vested interests has grown inevitably, by virtue of its promise of unlimited power, from humble home-made beginnings a century ago—while Victorian England's own double standard flourished—in Edison's New Jersey lab. Its growth forever tilted the balance of Western power overseas from the Empire to another kind of empire already adept enough to costume itself as a highly-developed free enterprise system. And of course its undercurrent in American life has, probably forever, determined those technocratic priorities that because of a nation's scope and self-induced dependencies become self-justified, self-perpetuating, and necessarily inhumane, anti-self. The dynamo that generates our particular brand of superpower long ago began conducting through our language and ourselves the peculiarly modern connotations of words like *security*, bastard words like *scenario*, and slogans like *executive privilege*.

So, after reading Sloat, it's not surprising to hear echoing back in time the script of a "scenario" like the current thwarted cover-up at the still projected Marble Hill nuclear plant in southern Indiana. There, where defective concrete was not only reluctantly discovered but reportedly inadequately patched, we find a "public servant" utility merely acting on longstanding precedent. Sloat cites the example of government servant Charles Schwab who, while employed by Carnegie Steel in 1894, discharged a huge U.S. Navy contract by working his shifts around the clock, although Navy inspectors assigned to insure the contract terms only presided during the day. "There was more furious activity than ever when the inspectors left. The imperfections in the metal, caused by uneven cooling, were plugged up." When called before a House committee and asked whether the concealment was carried out with his knowledge, Schwab brazened out the assault:

> 'Well, the concealment was not, no; but I had knowledge of this fact, that they did not make any plates that did not have blowholes.'
>
> 'You had knowledge that these blowholes were plugged in many instances?'
>
> 'No sir, I did not say that. I said I had knowledge that the plates had blowholes, and that I should not be surprised if they were concealed.'

What might surprise us in *1929*—the daft naiveté that by 1929 had allowed a

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public to be converted into a consumer society—isn't much explored in the book, though Sloat avers that the trend distressed even Henry Ford who, as much as anyone, had caused its generation. Instead, Sloat's predilection for narrating the publicized events of the time focuses us on movers and shakers, and also contributes to the patchwork quality of this work, where, under loose headings (*e.g.* "Machinery, the New Messiah") Sloat takes up, drops, and sometimes returns to celebrity subjects much in the manner of his sources' descendants, those gossip-oriented magazines and papers that pretend to carry news to our doorstep today.

Sloat does manage to concoct a "staccato history by vignette as evocative as a photograph album," as the jacket leaf's puff promises. But the satisfactions of reflective movement that a more controlled prose narrative of a period might provide elude us, too. In his interest of assembling a panoramic coruscation of ironies, his nostalgic/anti-nostalgic snapshots, Sloat sometimes piques our curiosity without deepening our understanding.

But despite lack of an adequate structure to support the frequently shuffled, occasionally telescoped chronologies Sloat tries to animate, and the book's bias toward chronicling "extraordinary lives" via its kind of voyeuristic history-telling, *1929* offers enough valuable insight into the American scene then and now to recommend itself for consumption as a sort of time-traveler's guidebook.

It is chastening and worthwhile to discover or rediscover that we've allowed ourselves to be herded in the closing quarter of this century into a dreamworld so startlingly similar to the one our forebears inhabited during the century's first quarter. Today as only yesterday we have learned to accept celebrity as fame, sacrificed privacy to the dictates of public information thanks to the electronic tools at hand, increased our appetite for news to such an extent that we need to invent and manage much of it before anything can happen, and, although badly burned by technology gone awry, have come to require always higher orders of technology to solve applied science's errors. Sloat's account of public response to the real news of watch-dial painters dying from radium poisoning might serve today as a summary tacked on to any number of Gallup polls concerning equally critical human dilemmas:

> Technology produced breakdown as well as development, and to systems as well as to individual people . . . But most people were no more disheartened by technology's death tolls than by its effect on moral standards. The dominant answer, in many of the leading magazines of the time, was that when scientific minds like Edison's and Ford's ruled the world, the cure for technology's harmful effects would be solved—by more technology. Applied science would in time solve all problems.

All we might lack are adequate names to fill the blanks left by Edison's and Ford's removal. *1929* is valuable, as well, for its lengthy multifaceted portraits of these two idiosyncratic American geniuses—Ford, a very private person who ironically stage-managed not only the highly-touted Light's Golden Jubilee, but also the movement of the American economy toward mass production and the creation of a mass audience for the products; and Edison who, according to Sloat, "had founded the modern technological-social matrix" and whose "social and commercial senses were perfectly integrated," a lionized public man whose name nonetheless had been absorbed into General Electric, who came to be effectively frozen out from participating in the mass production of and profits from many of his own inventions, and who labored unsuccessfully for years toward the end of his life to find a plentiful domestic source of rubber.

With heroes of this sort, Sears' Julius Rosenwald, the Rockefellers, Morgans, Insull and others, and its panoply of anecdotes, *1929* succeeds, in spite of its diffuse narrative, at least as a loosely-jointed parable as apt for our time as for theirs. From *1929* we might well turn to someone like Studs Terkel for the more intimate news and history of the people who, under such heroes, were finding themselves herded, images of light bulbs in mind, into hard times, even as we've found ourselves, survivors of a similar dreamscape, images of light-bulb-shaped nuclear clouds in mind, being herded ever more intently by the celebrities that run our nation toward even harder times.

Correspondence

(Continued from page 450)

Saving & rereading

Elmira, N.Y.

To the Editors: If you would like to increase your circulation, you'll just have to discontinue publishing so many items that are worth saving and rereading. This policy causes me to Xerox items or pursue the person to whom I lend copies; the enclosed check is for a friend who is a reliable returner but is now moving out of town.

The latest instance of your publishing "keepers" is Silver Donald Cameron's beautiful article, "At the Hour of Our Death" [June 6]. Thank you.

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